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## **China**

### ***RENEWED DEBATE ON MAO ZEDONG THOUGHT ON LITERATURE AND ART***

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# China

## Renewed Debate on Mao Zedong Thought on Literature and Art

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## RENEWED DEBATE ON MAO ZEDONG THOUGHT ON LITERATURE AND ART

### Xia Zhongyi Challenges Mao Thought on Literature, Art

90CM0013A Beijing WENXUE PINGLUN  
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15 Jul 89 pp 5-20

[Article by Xia Zhongyi (1115 0022 5030): "History  
Cannot Be Evaded"; dated 26 March 1989]

[Text] **Editor's note:** *We, of course, see a need for a relatively rational, factual, and scientific historicist principle. This should be so with regard to contemplation of literature as with anything else. We must earnestly discuss anything that is influenced by history and is subject to the laws of history; anything that was one-sided or limited during its time; anything that appears today to require reconsideration and needs to be reexamined or redefined.*

*Perhaps there have been very few historical periods in which change has occurred at such an overwhelmingly rapid pace as is now the case in China. If theory and concepts usually manifest themselves as the inertia of historical progress, this is especially true in a time of huge, overnight changes and an explosion of information. This faces theoretical workers with a severe test. It requires that each of us do everything possible to help China revitalize itself, achieve modernization, and become democratic.*

*Our literature has traversed 40 years since the establishment of the nation. We have created this column in order to publish a few overarching analyses. We are not afraid of seeing some old ideologies, concepts, and beliefs challenged or cast aside. We have the courage to explore and establish new systems of thought, new concepts, and new theories. As we attempt to gain a clear understanding of the path our literature has traveled, and as we discuss how it should proceed in the future, we hope that everyone will take an interest in this column.*

### The Relationship Between the Periodization of Contemporary Literary History and Mao Zedong Thought on Literature and Art

History is always written by those who come after. Being of the same age as the republic, when I retrace the trajectory of literature and art during the 40 years since the founding of the nation, I find that if we do not make an effort to analyze the core of Mao Zedong Thought on literature and art, and follow it to its conclusion, we will be committing a conscious or unconscious evasion of this crucial issue. If we avoid this issue, then all research on the history of contemporary literary criticism will either border on the meaningless, or will someday be rejected as muddle-headed nonsense.

There are two reasons why it is difficult to separate the tumultuous history of contemporary literary criticism from Mao Zedong Thought on literature and art. One

reason is that, although Mao Zedong Thought on literature and art was indeed originally expounded in Mao Zedong's *Yanan Talks on Literature and Art*, it did not belong solely to Mao Zedong. As the theoretical foundation upon which the party's wartime program on literature and art was based, it had long since become a political theory on art which was dominant throughout the party. With the founding of the New China, his thought on literature and art was, of course, bound to be elevated to the status of a bright light, illuminating all of the country. At the same time, in a country where socialist democracy was still unsound and the legacy of feudal autocracy still lay heavily upon the land, once a particular body of thought on literature and art became a sensitive part of the national ideology, it ceased to be academic and became political. This, in effect, injected an element of insecurity into the literary community, because it not only made the creation and interpretation of literary and artistic theory a bailiwick of officialdom, it also led to a situation in which any future revisions of the official position on literature and art would either be a signal of looming high-level political struggle, or would serve to spark a new political campaign. Thus, it is not difficult to explain why a simple question like "What is literature and art?" has time and again touched off tidal waves of fear.

If we set aside the political background and examine the issue from an academic perspective, I would say that the path traced by mainstream contemporary literature has been lost, and it has been searching for its way. This mainstream literary path, twisted into the shape of a wave, can be broken into two stages on the basis of changes in literary and artistic concepts. The first 29 years were the "lost period," and the last 11 years have been the "period of search." These periods can be further broken down. We can take the 29-year "lost period" and "divide one into two." The 17 years prior to the Cultural Revolution (1949-1966) were the "early lost period," and the 10 years during the Cultural Revolution plus the two years during which we "grasped the key link in running the country" (the "key link" being class struggle) were the "later lost period" (1966-1978). Together with the most recent 11-year "period of searching," the total is 40 years. This way of periodizing the serpentine history of our literary criticism corresponds with the revision, development, and even reappraisal of the core of Mao Zedong Thought on literature and art. Therefore, the fate of Mao Zedong Thought on literature and art is truly intertwined with the main thread of literary development since the founding of the nation, and it is for this reason that there is no way for research into the history of contemporary literary criticism to avoid taking a fresh look at Mao Zedong Thought on literature and art.

### Resolute Insistence on the Practical Political Function of Literature and Art is the Core of Mao Zedong Thought on Literature and Art

What is the core of Mao Zedong Thought on literature and art? The core, as the spiritual substance of theoretical structure, is the ultimate basis upon which a given

system's conceptual boundaries are set and its axioms built. The core is, in reality, the source of all development within a given theory. All concepts and conclusions within a given framework proceed from this source. That is to say, all the fundamental tenets of Mao Zedong Thought on literature and art are products of its core. To sum it up in a single sentence, this core is the insistence that literature and art be subordinate to politics; it is a one-sided stress on the practical political function of literature and art. What is forgotten is that literature and art, by nature, are about appreciation of beauty.

It was inevitable that Mao Zedong would make the practical political function of literature and art the core of his theory. This inevitability stemmed first of all from the famous "worker, peasant, soldier orientation." It was Mao Zedong's invention to establish the "worker, peasant, soldier orientation" as the standard for China's revolutionary literature and art. Before, the academic community had judged the "worker, peasant, soldier orientation" from the perspective of humanist ethics; thus they were filled with boundless gratitude for the merciful way in which Mao Zedong had cared for his people.

When we look at it now, we don't think this way any more. We think that the fundamental values of Mao Zedong's "worker, peasant, soldier orientation" were not derived from ethics, but from politics. Mao Zedong went not as a scholar of ethics to give his *Yanan Talks*, but as a political strategist. Mao Zedong had seen clearly that China's revolution was, by nature, a peasant war led by the party. For this reason, the key to the success or failure of the revolution was entirely a matter of whether the party would be able to win over the peasants, who constituted the vast majority of the entire country's population. Whoever controlled the peasants controlled the lifeline of the future China, because this was a truly great potential revolutionary army. This is where Mao Zedong's perspicacity surpassed that of Chen Duxiu [7115 3747 4423] and others, and it is this force which prompted Mao Zedong to go to Jinggangshan. What did he use to attract the peasants? Apart from the model example set by the shock troops, he also had to depend on two revolutionary weapons: Materially, it was land distribution; spiritually, it was the organization of campaigns in which people poured out their resentments, that is, political agitation. It was precisely in this area where Mao Zedong saw that literature and art were an indispensable screw in his political machine. It was necessary to use literature and art to give figurative description to the hardships and struggles of the people, and to popularize these descriptions in traditional folk forms, in order to do a more effective job of spurring peasants both in and out of military uniform to attack and destroy the enemy. In short, the things that Mao Zedong said in his *Talks*—that writers and artists had to immerse themselves in the lives of workers, peasants, and soldiers; that they had to change their point of view, ideas, and ideals; that they had to pay attention to spreading basic knowledge of literature and art and to

further improving knowledge where people already had some basic understanding; that Chinese content and style had to be promoted in literature and art—all of these things flowed from the insistence on the practical political function of literature and art which lay at the core of his thought on the subject.

Viewed in this manner, the pronouncement that "our literature and art is for the people, and first of all for the workers, peasants, and soldiers," should be changed, for accuracy, to read "it is first for the peasants." It should be changed in this way for two reasons. One is that there was no large industry with modern machinery in the border areas when the Communist Party was taking refuge there, so the classic working class could not form. The other reason is that I would like to analyze the historical significance of the term "workers, peasants, and soldiers" in a more objective manner, and bring it more in line with the core of Mao Zedong Thought on literature and art. Yes, when Mao Zedong drew up the seating order for the revolutionary classes in the Hall of Literature and Art, he did not base anything on the guests' degree of aesthetic cultivation, but on their practical value in a wartime situation. If their degree of aesthetic cultivation were a deciding factor, the petty bourgeoisie or intellectuals living in their pavilions in the cities must surely have had a little more knack for art than some barefoot hicks living in caves, for which reason their demands of literature and art might have been more exacting, refined, and penetrating. However, from a political perspective, whether in terms of temperament or behavior, the former would have felt less urgently the need for revolution than peasants, who were "poor and thus anxious for change." Furthermore, the bourgeoisie and intellectuals were few in number, so they could not play a leading role on the stage of history, and thus had no right to enjoy literature and art from a front-row seat. This was quite logical.

This point reminds me suddenly that there is actually a very deep significance to the fact that China for years has linked together the phrases "literature and art serve politics" and "literature and art serve the workers, peasants, and soldiers." It is apparent that the coupling of these two sentences was not the result of mechanistic, fortuitous happenstance. Don't be deceived by their unassuming appearance. Under the surface, these two phrases are a mutually complementary expression with deep, subtle meaning and a rigorous structure. With these two sentences, the former dictates the nature of the latter, and the latter interprets the intent of the former. More simply stated, the phrase "literature and art serve the workers, peasants, and soldiers" was used as a tactic to achieve the goal of making "literature and art serve politics." That is to say, the main reason that literature and art "are first of all for the workers, peasants, and soldiers" was not to raise their level of aesthetic discernment or to increase their culture. The focus was on political agitation aimed at the needs of the revolution. Otherwise, how are we to explain why Mao Zedong did not advocate that literature and art should also serve the



urban petty bourgeoisie and intellectuals? Because, on the scales of war, their weight was negligible. Otherwise, it would be quite difficult to explain why Mao Zedong was so insistent on spreading literature and art, and why he made it taboo to raise the level of pure art. In reality, as a poet with a finely honed esthetic sensibility, Mao Zedong was not necessarily enthralled by peasants doing their "Yangko" dance or singing their "Xintianyou." In ancient Chinese poetry, he only admired Li Bai, Li He, and Li Shangyin even though, in comparison with Du Fu (whose poetry included the line "I place you in a more important position than the emperors of Yao and Shun," the "three Li's" wrote less realistic poetry and belonged to the high-aesthete faction. However, one could say, on the other hand, that the political consciousness of Mao Zedong, as a leader who had given his life to the revolution, was already extremely advanced, and that he did not need literature and art to spur him on. This also serves to prove from another angle that Mao's efforts to spread literature and art and his advocacy of the "worker, peasant, and soldier orientation" were both aimed at increasing the political usefulness of literature and art.

I firmly believe that when Mao Zedong brought forth his "worker, peasant, and soldier orientation," he definitely did not take his own artistic sensibilities into account. You could say that this purely political thought process embodied the grand vision of a strategist, because Mao Zedong was indeed concerned only about the well-being of the nation. He was not in any way motivated by personal gain. However, from the perspective of literature, art, and aesthetics, it is not hard to come up with the following question: When a literary theory cannot even include the poetic and artistic tastes of its author, how are people going to believe that the theory can be widely applicable? In reality, the purpose of Mao Zedong's *Talks* was not to answer questions about the nature of literature and art, but only to answer the question, "What can literature and art do in a revolutionary war?" The *Talks* did not explore the nature of literature and art in terms of literature and art themselves; they merely regulated what literature and art had to be in terms of what politics urgently needed from literature and art. To be sure, I freely acknowledge the propaganda function of literature and art during specific periods in history. A heart-rending song like *Over the Songhua River* could indeed ignite flames of anti-Japanese sentiment among refugees from the northeast, but this is not what developing vocal music is really about, after all. Literature and art is by nature about the appreciation of beauty. It is about contemplation of things in a world of images, created by imagination and sentiment, that are deep and silent. Perhaps they can exert a subtle influence on the culture and personality of those who are exposed to them, but they certainly do not impinge directly upon reality to change history. That is the territory of politicians and militarists. There is no need for literature and art to get involved. The use of criticism as a weapon cannot take the place of using weapons to criticize. However, in order to enable literary

and artistic criticism to be converted as much as possible into armed criticism, Mao Zedong not only compressed the many functions of literature and art into a single political function; he also submerged the aesthetic nature of literature and art in order to establish his theory of a single function. There was once talk about how the stalwart soldiers of the 8th Route Army, when watching the opera *White-Haired Girl*, always wanted to shoot the actor playing the part of Huang Shiren when he raped Xi'er. Perhaps what was needed at that time was precisely this equation of literature and art with politics.

### **The Early Lost Period (Part I): The Challenge Posed to Mao Zedong Thought on Literature and Art by Hu Feng's Criticisms**

The nature of literature and art—appreciation of beauty—was lost in the labyrinth of politics. The negative effect of this occurrence on the development of literature and art did not become so clear until after the nation was founded. That is not to say that the wartime program, whose core tenet was the practical political function of literature and art, had absolutely no negative effect upon the gestation of revolutionary literature and art. (Ding Ling's *The Sun Is Shining on the Sanggan River*, for example, was far inferior to her first work, *Diary of a Woman Named Shafei*, although it won the Stalin Prize. Its description of human nature was less trenchant, and its artistic appeal much weaker.) Changed historical conditions, though, made it easier to see the original nature of the wartime program. In comparison with the bloody years of war, the skies of New China were a peaceful blue, after all. During the life-and-death crises of the war years, when the soldiers and people in the soviets faced sword and fire, they had neither the time nor the ability to enjoy art that was too subtle. What they needed were flags and bombs, not scintillating dances and flashy costumes. After liberation, however, the world changed, and people wanted something new for a change. In the words of Zhou Yang [0719 2254], in addition to singing the *Internationale*, people needed a few light songs and spirited dances or their lives would be shortened. When the weather changes, the reasonable thing to do is to change one's clothing. This is the common sense which Mao Zedong always stressed. However, sometimes an individual can get too cocky. He can lose his head and go against his original purpose. This not only prevented the party's literature and art program in the early post-liberation period from being able to lighten its clothing when the weather turned warm; what is more, because the party now wielded enormous power, it actually tightened the bindings on the literary community, and maintained even stricter control. The impact of this upon literary and artistic theory was precisely what Hu Feng [5170 7364] was talking about when he spoke of "the five knives" which had been stabbed into the heads of writers and artists.

"Five knives!" What a vivid and apt description! This expressed Hu Feng's diametric opposition to the authoritarian ideas of such "authoritarian" spokesmen as Lin Mohan [2651 7817 3211] and He Qifang [0149 0366

5364]. It was also his denunciation of their rigid and frighteningly leftist dogma. The first of "the five knives" was the theory that "there must be no creation that is not based on reason." "Reason" here means a revolutionary world view. Lin and He decreed that one's creative method is inseparable from his or her world view, and that one must, therefore, first have a revolutionary world view if he or she is to create anything. If one did not yet have a revolutionary world view, what could be done? Lin and He unsheathed their second knife: the theory that "one must remake his or her thinking." This required that one first study government documents and become immersed in real life. Take note: "Real life" here means specifically the struggles of workers, peasants, and soldiers, and does not refer in a more general sense to "family matters, love stories, and so on." This brings us to the third knife: the "single source" theory. So then, did writers and artists have creative freedom after they had become soaked with the sweat of workers, covered with the mud of peasants, and spattered with the blood of soldiers? Slow down! You could only write about the struggles of the workers, peasants, and soldiers which were carried out with the benefit of organization and leadership. You could write about the heroes of these struggles, but you could not say anything about the emotional grief they felt due to "the wounds of spiritual slavery." That was the fourth knife—the "subject selection" theory. The fifth knife was the "national form" theory. If you really wanted to praise great feats and laud righteousness, the only way to do so was by adhering to popular traditional folk forms, tunes, or crafts, in order to suit the tastes of the broadest stratum of society.

These "five knives" were like an orderly assembly line that whittles away at the function of writers and artists—appreciation of beauty. It is not hard to imagine the harm this wreaked upon the arts. Anyone, whether a Red singing star from the backwoods, or a pillar of the literary world from the foreign concession of a major city, who still had any rash hope of contributing true art to New China unavoidably met with a double predicament in the assembly line. If your artistic conscience had not withered and you really wanted to loyally serve the country, you would not have been willing to let yourself be processed on the assembly line, because this would have meant the castration of art's true nature—appreciation of beauty. However, if you did not submit to the assembly line, you would have been prevented from creating anything, and left with no way to serve your country. This is the "Catch-22" of China's literary world. Indeed, the divine figure who could successfully run the theoretical gauntlet of "the five knives" while coming up with a classical work to last through the ages never did appear. For those writers and artists who entered New China from Kuomintang territory, the spiritual shackles may have been even heavier. Because they had no revolutionary record or political credentials, they had to bear the pain of putting their pens aside—the first thing was to study political documents and submit to brainwashing (otherwise known as thought reform). It is said that writers and artists used to be divided into

four categories: The first included those who had already been reformed; the second included those who did not need reform; the third included those who had been through reform but had been completely reformed; and the fourth included those who had not yet been through reform. And what was the basis for determining whether a person's reform had gone well? Was there a firm standard? No. The matter depended solely upon the flexible will of whatever official was in charge. And even if you jumped through all the hoops and gained the right from the relevant official to create something, you had to keep your tail tightly between your legs—don't dare let it wag!—because behind you were still two formidable specters glowering over you—the "subject selection" theory and the "national form" theory. Xiao Yemu [5618 0048 3668] bloodied his nose by challenging the "subject selection" theory. He dared to write about the smaller aspects of life in *Between My Wife and Me*, while paying no attention to the grandeur of the struggles of the workers, peasants, and soldiers. This writer, a party member, brought the wrath of the party upon himself. It was a case of "killing a chicken to scare the monkeys." And the pillars of our literary world were so surprisingly docile! Some of them bid silent farewell to literature; some gave up writing about subjects with which they were most familiar and about which they most wanted to write; and, of all things, some made ridiculous changes to the works which had made them famous (whether it was due to zealous spirit or done in bad conscience is unclear) in order to suit the times. China's literary community, which had only begun to bask in the glow of the five-star flag, turned desolate and gloomy in the wink of an eye, or at least began to become so.

*The Views of Hu Feng on the Issue of Literature and Art*, a work unveiled in 1954, was like a tragic song exploding in a dreary silence. Hu Feng was a tenacious poet and critic, just like his mentor, Lu Xun. He could not restrain himself. This enormous book, which ran to 300,000 characters, was a comprehensive collection of all the thoughts about aesthetics which had occurred to Hu Feng throughout the years, and it was a righteous call to arms. You could also say that it was only because Hu Feng had always maintained a great reverence for independent thought, and had not allowed his mind to become a racetrack across which other people's ideology galloped, that he was able to directly attack "the five knives" in his indignant "memorial to the throne." In another sense, his lucid observations, which had been scattered among his various writings, actually gained much clearer expression as a result of this contentious challenge. Strictly speaking, Hu Feng's strength was not in any rigorously structured, systematic body of thought; he called attention to the anti-aesthetic tendency of "the five knives" by dint of his extremely keen sensibility as a poet and his penetrating insight as a political observer. For him, deep contemplation or deduction were practically unnecessary, because his deep feeling for "the three secrets" of art were constantly reminding him that, apart from their use as a political instrument, literature and art were still by nature about the appreciation of beauty, and

the appreciation of beauty could not be separated from imagination, feelings, and personality. For this reason, the fact that literary and artistic creation were by nature matters of aesthetic creation meant that the prime importance of the writer or artist in the process of creation had to be respected. The creator had to exercise or inject one's own "subjective fighting spirit" into his or her work. Thus, a progressive writer or artist could gradually approach Marxism through his or her creative activities. There was no need to have a revolutionary world view before engaging in creative activity. This flew in the face of the theory that "creation must be based on reason" and the theory that "reform comes first." Second, since the term "subjective fighting spirit" of writers and artists refers to their overall cultural attitudes toward life, history, and the world, Hu Feng felt they should all be qualified to engage in creative activities and write about their own lives as long as they were in line with the tide of history, regardless of whether they had escaped to the Red areas or had taken up arms in the war. In effect, the ideological and revolutionary orientation of a given work did not depend on its subject, but on the way its subject was treated. This broke with the "subject selection" theory. Third, even the blazing struggles of the workers, peasants, and soldiers could not enter the creative process until they had been incorporated into the spirit and flesh of writers and artists. Thus, Hu Feng felt that the aesthetic flavor of life (the source material of literature and art) was not determined by its objective impact upon the course of history, but primarily by how strongly writers and artists experienced it. Thus, with total confidence that he was in the right, Hu Feng shouted out, "life is everywhere." This negated the "single source" theory. His final point was that, because form and content are cut from the same cloth and because the brilliant views of a great author like Lu Xun were ahead of his time and ran contrary to tradition, popular folk traditions and crafts should not be the shackles that confine the artistic impulse. On the contrary, he felt that a writer or artist had the complete right to innovate or borrow from the West to remake the Eastern mold. This was an assault on the "national form" theory of Lin and He.

When Hu Feng sallied forth against Lin Mohan and He Qifang, it undeniably represented a challenge against the *Talks*. There are two reasons why this is so. The first is that Lin and He were the legally designated interpreters of Mao Zedong Thought on literature and art. The second reason is that every world in the phrase "five knives" had a history of its own—they came from the *Talks*. The interesting thing is that Hu Feng asserted that "the five knives" were the result of the deformation of Mao Zedong Thought on literature and art by Lin and He, and he went to incredible lengths to provide quotations from the original edition of the *Talks* to correct the errors of Lin and He. In so doing, he placed undue blame on these two interpreters. To be sure, in comparison with the undisguised "five knives," the overall style of the original *Talks* was indeed fair and reasonable. Its tone was one of earnest instruction, not of bullying and

intimidation. It was an effort to persuade, not a set of orders. When Mao came to a key concept, he would often make a great effort to give a comprehensive discussion of all related points. The points he strived to drive across, tempered as they were by dialectical logic, were like smooth pebbles at the bottom of a stream—although the sharp edges had been abraded and polished by the water, the general shape of the original stone was still discernible. The function of the interpreters was only to strip away the dialectical adjectives and outer garments from the original theory in response to the necessities of the time, allowing the blurry outlines of the core ideology to emerge sharply into focus. This was truly an ingenious political stratagem which allowed Mao great maneuverability. If the interpreters dressed up the original meaning in a manner pleasing to everyone, this would be seen as merely bringing into focus the beauty of the original *Talks*. If the interpreters violated the original meaning or expounded upon it in a displeasing way, people could still go back to the original. Unfortunately, Hu Feng overlooked this point.

In my opinion, the reason why Hu Feng magnified the discrepancy between the interpreters and the original theory is that, apart from avoiding political suspicion and attempting to "eliminate the pernicious types surrounding the emperor," there was an even more important reason: Hu Feng's revision of Mao Zedong Thought on literature and art was only a limited revision. That is to say, overall, Hu Feng did not and could not deny the assumption that literature and art were political instruments. In terms of theoretical significance, he could only be said to have risen in revolt inasmuch as he wanted literature and art to maintain their aesthetic nature even as they continued to serve politics. This was not due merely to the fact that he had once been an important member of the "Leftist Writer's Union" and had been immersed in the ideology of the Lapu [2139 2528] Faction. In reality, even though this mournful 300,000-character book was like "the cuckoo that cries tears of blood," it proved that what really motivated Hu Feng to don his armor and memorialize the throne was not the fact that literature and art had completely shed their aesthetic clothing since liberation. The question that caused him the most anguish was why literature and art did not have as great a social impact in the New China they had had in wartime! It is apparent that the standard against which Hu Feng measured the predicament of literature and art during the early post-liberation period was not the May 4th "literary revolution" (whose standard was borne by the works of Lu Xun); it was clearly the "revolutionary literature" so popular in the ideology of the Lapu Faction by which he found guidance. In fact, Hu Feng held a dualist view of literature and art. In his mind, literature and art had a dual nature; they were both a political instrument and aesthetic creation. Or, one could also say that literature and art were political instruments onto which an aesthetic function had been grafted. In comparison with the power of officialdom and the gun barrels of the battlefields, literature and art were covered with a veil that charmed people and



excited the imagination. This veil was light and thin, but it could not be discarded under any circumstances, or it would not qualify as literature or art. Hu Feng's dualist theory did not, in essence, violate the monist theory that literature and art serve politics. On the contrary, on a higher plane, it was still subsumed within the monist theory. The intent of the dualist theory was only to inject a little color and do a little fixing up within the framework of the monist theory. For this reason, the dualist theory of Hu Feng could also be called the "complement" theory. Another theory stood in opposition to the "complement" theory—the "substitution" theory. This theory, while stressing that literature and art are political instruments, ignored their aesthetic nature. In those undemocratic times when metaphysics ran rampant, and it was much easier for literature and art to slide from the "instrument" theory toward the "substitution" theory than it was to steer the "instrument" theory toward the "complement" theory, because in this way no one had to think much or use the dialectical method, for one thing, and it was much easier to display one's resolute political stance, for another. Thus, not only did the "complement" theory lose out to the "substitution" theory; in the end, the "complement" theorist himself, Hu Feng, was unfortunately swept for a time into "the rubbish bin of history."

Precisely because Hu Feng was a dualist, he could not understand one thing: the reason why he tenaciously hounded the gatekeepers to the straight and narrow ideological path, instead of plunging into the labyrinth of politics in order to search out the long-lost essence of culture, was because his own view of culture was a fuzzy compromise. Faced with the question, "What are literature and art?," he always vacillated, claiming they were "both this... and that." He was unable to give a specific answer. Therefore, I think that the entire literary community, including Hu Feng, had not found its way out of the labyrinth of politics in the early post-liberation period. If we are to say that Hu Feng was more enlightened than Lin and He, it was only that he had, unlike the others, a fearful sense that something had been lost. He did not necessarily know clearly what it was that had actually been lost. To be precise, even if he were aware what it was that literature and art had lost, he still did not know what had caused this loss. He was incorrect to blame this loss on "the five knives." In personal terms, this was undeniably a brave act, but from the standpoint of theory, it did not get to the bottom of the issue, because the ideological core upon which "the five knives" rested was nothing other than the theory of literature and art as an "instrument," so cherished by Hu Feng himself. By holding on to the "instrument" theory while rejecting "the five knives," Hu Feng showed that he wanted the cause, but not the result. The gaping inconsistencies in his thought process call to mind the doctor of herbal medicine in the ancient joke in which who only snipped away the arrow shaft protruding from his patient's body while paying no attention to the arrowhead buried in the flesh. This shows that Hu Feng's revision of Mao Zedong Thought on literature and art

was actually only a partial revision, not a comprehensive demolition and reconstruction.

**The Early Lost Period (Continued): The Revision of Mao Zedong Thought on Literature and Art Represented by Zhou Yang's Theory of "Depicting the Truth"**

One thing that gives much food for thought is the fact that Zhou Yang, who had once taken part in the struggle against Hu Feng, later took a revisionist path (vis-a-vis Mao Zedong Thought on literature and art) that rather resembled that of Hu Feng. The manner of expression was much different, of course. Hu Feng charged barehanded into battle, flashing the banner of a simple and unadorned theory which was "self-produced and self-marketed." He drew a battle line and threw a book into the fray. Zhou Yang took advantage of the promulgation of the "double hundred" policy to introduce, in a very reserved fashion, the realism of Belinsky, Chernyshevsky, and Dobrolyubov, which was very much in favor with Marx and Lenin. In a very cautious and roundabout manner, he set out to revise the wartime program.

The fact that Zhou Yang availed himself of the aesthetic mask or language of Belinsky, Chernyshevsky, and Dobrolyubov was not totally a survival technique. Zhou Yang really did see an affinity between Soviet realism and the Chinese literary scene. He discovered that the soul of the aesthetics of Belinsky, Chernyshevsky, and Dobrolyubov lay in the search for a way to make the highly artistic literature of the naturalist school respond more sharply to the movement for national liberation. This lit the path for their Chinese colleagues, because their purpose was precisely the inverse—to find a way to preserve their function of appreciating beauty at the same time that they served the needs of politics. Zhou Yang, the successor of [Belinsky, Chernyshevsky, and Dobrolyubov], was willing to go even further than his teachers in order to push the cause of realism. The "mythified" realism of Belinsky, Chernyshevsky, and Dobrolyubov merely took a realism based on specific rules of artistic imagery and raised it unconditionally to a level (in an academic sense) at which it was used as the standard in determining whether any work was art. Zhou Yang, on the other hand, frequently raised realism to the political level. It seemed that only writers and artists who sympathized with the revolution could be involved in realism. Even though Zhou Yang sincerely wanted to use a type of realist literature and art based on "depicting the truth" in order to make his contribution to politics, surprisingly, politics did not appreciate his efforts, because a centralized system does not actually want literature and art to face the world straight on. If literature and art were to set out in an excessively bold and aggressive manner to give thorough exposure to the ugliness and repressed beauty of reality, this would undeniably cause the current order to lose face. That is to say, the aftermath of the deification of realism would be the undeification of the current order. However, Zhou Yang had not seen how extremely unsuited realism was

to the needs of the current political system, and he had not seen that the top priority was consolidation and beautification (or deification) of the current order. The result was that the thing that Zhou Yang worked his heart out to give to politics was the very thing that was most taboo to politics. Small wonder that at the same time that *The Young Newcomer at the Organization Department*, by Wang Meng [3769 5536], was denounced as a poisonous weed in 1957, Qin Zhaoyang's [4440 0340 7122] theory of "the broad path of realism," which was related to Zhou Yang's theory of "depicting the truth," did not escape either.

What a strange cycle of events! Zhou Yang clearly introduced Belinsky, Chernyshevsky, and Dobrolyubov in order to better serve politics, but was kicked in the face by politics for having done so. What was the cause of this? I believe that the primary cause was this: Zhou Yang took a political risk when he introduced Belinsky, Chernyshevsky, and Dobrolyubov in such a rash manner without having grasped the subtle links between the central essence and the techniques of realism, and between its message and its form. What is the central essence of realism? It is the alert consciousness or critical purpose that is awakened in writers and artists when they use the ideals of humanism to observe and comprehend the world around them. Belinsky said, "What we seek is not ideals to live by, but life itself. We want only to portray it as it is. If it is bad, fine. If it is good, fine. We don't want to beautify it." When he said this, he made it clear a "cultural attitude" [wenhua taidu 2429 0553 1966 1653]: He was no longer willing to hold any illusions about the current order. He would comprehend it to be only what it was. The reason why this overall tendency to face life head on took Western Europe by storm in the mid-19th century was that the public, which had been immersed in humanism, felt a universal dismay that the real world was not as beautiful as their predecessors had described it. It was precisely this severe discrepancy between reality and ideals that prompted people to reexamine the real world with a critical eye. Thus, a method of writing and painting that stressed quotidian detail in order to achieve highly representative portraits of everyday life became the most ideal vehicle for delivering the modern cultural message described above. That is to say, with respect to its laws of artistic imagery, the central essence of realism springs from an expression of deep doubt or disappointment about whether the current order can last. Apparently, it was precisely this point which made the current body politic in China congenitally allergic to realism.

As the supreme authority, Mao Zedong proposed the method of creation known as "the combination of revolutionary realism and revolutionary romanticism." It was a set of principles for artistic imagery, and this allergic reaction, which certainly did not lack a target, indisputably carried deep and far-reaching implications. On the surface, this appeared to be a topic concerned only with aesthetics, but when one compares it with the

Soviet Union's "socialist realism," one vaguely discerns the craftsmanship of a politician encrypted within the jargon.

There were two main thrusts to "socialist realism." The first was to decree that literature and art must "provide a truthful, historical, and concrete description of reality from the perspective of actual revolutionary development." The second was to force literature and art to "combine the task of using socialist spirit to carry out their own ideological reform with the duty of educating the working people." It is apparent that the relationship between these two important points was a structural link. The former was the method, the latter the objective. The former ensured, through manipulative means, that literature and art would serve politics. The latter provided an ultimate standard which guaranteed that the natural function of literature and art would be, by definition, its practical political function. The intermediate link that tied these key points together was the limiting adverbial phrase "from the perspective of actual revolutionary development." What did this phrase mean? To be blunt, this was nothing more than a statement stressing the fact that the overall trends of the entire world, including life, history, and society, had already been indicated by the leaders. The role of writers and artists was only to use the artifices of realistic description to illustrate points of doctrine, thereby instilling in readers a blind faith in the current order. Their purpose was not to ask whether the order itself squared with one's conscience, so don't be deceived by the uncontentious appearance of the phrase "from the perspective of the real development of the revolution." It can fundamentally suffocate the independent personality of an artist and make realism degenerate into a cosmetic used to cover up the world.

Logically, "socialism" belongs to the realm of politics and economics, while "realism" belongs to the realm of aesthetics. It is not proper to simplify the issue by lumping them together under a single concept, because "realism," as a law of artistic imagery, is the purification of a kind of modern cultural temperament. It has nothing to do with politics or practical utility. It even rises above social classes, while "socialism" is intimately linked with the vested interests of a particular social class. That is to say, when Zhdanov and others tied together two realms which could hardly be equated, they acted not on scientific principle, but out of political necessity. If geometric laws can be negated when they go against the interests of people, then Zhdanov turned the idea around; for the sake of political necessity, he could arbitrarily fabricate a commandment for literature and art that went against logic. For this reason, although the idea of "socialist realism" appears to be a marriage of two equal realms, in fact, it is a matter of politics forcing matrimony upon literature and art. The motive was to force realism to toe the line, that is, writers and artists were not allowed to scrutinize the times of Stalin with the same sharp, cold eyes with which Tolstoy appraised the system of the Russian tsars. On the contrary, there was an urgent need for the kind of innocent, optimistic longing to beautify

the real world which prompted Gorky to write *Mother*. It was an attempt to use a kind of blind, romantic cheeriness to replace the alert, intellectual bent of the humanism of Russian literary tradition. It is clear that professional ideologues in the Soviet Union should have fallen in love with romanticism, so why was it precisely romanticism that was taboo to their lips? There were two reasons. The first was that Russian and Soviet literature had laid a firm realist foundation since the time of Gogol, while romanticism was nothing, historically, other than another word for mysticism or sentimentalism. This made it improper for Zhdanov and others to flirt rashly with romanticism while distancing themselves from realism. Second, the key reason why Zhdanov and the others wanted to force realism (instead of romanticism) and socialism to become sworn allies was that the tradition of realism in Russian and Soviet literature was too strong, and had penetrated too deeply into people's minds. If they did not take artful measures to guard against the critical spirit which was the essence of realism, it would surely plant the seeds of disaster for the current order. Thus, the best plan was to marry realism to socialism. In this way, it appeared on the surface that realism had become the highest creative method, legally sanctioned by the state, and that it was to be honored as the "first lady" of aesthetics. In reality, however, she was in effect put under house arrest. Although she shared the same bed with politics, politics never sincerely loved her, or it could be said that although politics was always in possession of realism, it was actually romanticism that ignited the passion of politics. What a subtle piece of aesthetic adulteration!

For this reason, Mao Zedong brought forward the "combination of two" creative method. In so doing, he said what Zhdanov and others had wanted so much to say, but in the end refrained from saying. There were two reasons why Mao Zedong was able to do this. First, Chinese literature, where humanism held only a tenuous presence, was not like Russian and Soviet literature, which was deeply rooted in realism. Thus, there was no need to make the term "romanticism" taboo the way Zhdanov did. This had to do with the origins of modern Chinese literature. Second, in terms of personalities, Mao Zedong undeniably had more of a literary streak in him than did Zhdanov. He was crazy about the unconstrained "three Li's," with their amazing sharpness and lyrical beauty. In addition, there is the fact that the tumultuous, dizzying atmosphere of the Great Leap Forward in 1958 was set in motion by Mao himself, from the top down. This movement, based on the idea that the human will can overcome all obstacles, exploded amidst an atmosphere of fantasy and zeal. All of these phenomena helped him to come up with the "combination of two" method in hopes of Sinicizing the doctrine of Zhdanov. Mao Zedong's "combination of two," vis-a-vis Zhou Yang's "write the truth," had the effect of "clarifying the central purpose and returning to the origin." The phrase "clarifying the original purpose" refers to the reiteration that the original purpose of literature and art is its practical political function. The phrase "returning

to the origin" refers to making the entire literary community return to the time of the *Talks*. It was a statement that the wellspring of the revolutionary literature and art of China lay at the banks of the Yan River, not by the distant Volga. This meant that the thrust of the "combination of two" was to clear up the aesthetic confusion that had been scattered about by Zhou Yang's "depict the truth," thereby plugging up every hole through which writers and artists since 1949 had managed to poke expressions of their unwillingness to give complete loyalty to the current body politic.

There is a problem. How could a little bit of mumbling about "depicting the truth" from a man so innately cautious as Zhou Yang startle "the old man" into giving a big speech during a Central Committee meeting about the "combination of two"? I think this was probably because Mao Zedong, a man of extraordinarily sensitive political instincts, perceived the latent suspicion of the real world which characterized the modern temperament, and which found continued expression in the movement to "depict the truth." He saw that it might pose an even more dangerous threat than the simple and unadorned theory of Hu Feng. The most that this theory would do was spark off "liberalism" in the literary community, while "writing the truth" directly negated the deification or beautification of the current order. Precisely for this reason, when Mao Zedong discovered in the early sixties that Zhou Yang had stepped up his boldness, attempting to replace the Yanan program by stating that "literature and art must serve the broadest spectrum of the people" (even though Zhou Yang wrote more voluminously than anyone to sing the praises of the "combination of two"), his attitude toward Zhou Yang turned cold and severe, and his judgment of Zhou Yang became harsher. If Mao Zedong's first mention of the "combination of two" in 1958 was very like "a pleasant exchange of views between scholars," then Mao's comments between 1962 and 1964 on the literary and artistic work carried out under Zhou Yang's supervision were grave warnings. He excoriated the Ministry of Culture (which was under the leadership of Zhou Yang), calling it the "ministry of gifted scholars and beautiful ladies," and the "ministry of dead stiff and foreigners." Mao said that the art societies for literature, theater, music, dance, cinema, and various folk arts, all of which fell under Zhou Yang's jurisdiction, were all on the verge, to differing degrees, of rotting into a "Peduofei" [5952 1122 5481] Club and stumbling onto "the edges of revisionism." Wow! Indeed, when Mao Zedong himself thrice revised the *Summary of the Meeting on Work in the Military in Literature and Art* called by Jiang Qing at the request of Comrade Lin Biao in February 1962, he unsheathed his mace. He said that Zhou Yang had laid a thick, long "antiparty, antisocialist black line for literature and art." The gang of four soon ruled during the Cultural Revolution that he was a member of the "counterrevolutionary two-faced faction," which "trumpeted the cause of bourgeois literature and art, and was an effort to restore capitalism."



When Yao Wenyan [1202 2429 0337] denounced Zhou Yang as a "member of the counterrevolutionary two-faced faction," it was purely vicious slander, and should have received no credit. However, at the risk of bringing a flood of criticism upon myself, I would like to add one sentence. Although it is true that the charge that Zhou Yang was a "counterrevolutionary" was unwarranted, nevertheless, people were not without reason in suspecting Zhou Yang of being "two-faced." For example, although Zhou Yang, like Hu Feng, intended to revise the Yanan program, he did not fight as hard as Hu. On the contrary, he actively fought against Hu. The reason he did so, apart from factional rivalry, had to do with the complexity of the political situation. Zhou Yang wanted to hold onto his spot on the political stage, but he did not want to go against his conscience forever, never saying what he truly felt. Therefore, he had no choice but to change the color of his skin as the political seasons changed, just like a chameleon. Also, he wanted to enable the literary community to preserve a trace of its aesthetic function by saving himself. If healthy democratic practices had predominated in the party, Zhou Yang would not necessarily have liked to wriggle like a snake between two extremes. Zhou Yang was truly under duress. As a thinker with a deep feel for history, he was always worried that later generations might not understand why his own generation rendered absolute obedience, as if they were the cardinals in Rome. However, as an administrative official not without a knack for survival, he understood that he was wobbling along on a tightrope, and that he would commit a mistake which would cause him eternal regret if he were not cautious. If we judge Zhou Yang's "depict the truth" by today's standards, it was not thorough at all, and it skirted many issues. However, if we think back to the asperity of the environment in which "class struggle was the key link," even a dampened sort of aesthetic allure ("cradling the zither, half covering the face") was definitely not allowed. Yes, in my opinion, the dispute between Zhou Yang and Mao Zedong was in no way a "struggle between two different lines" with any implications for the future of the party, nor was it a life-and-death "class struggle." With respect to its academic significance, they only had a slight difference over the function of literature and art. In the final analysis, Zhou Yang was walking the same road as Mao Zedong; it was only that Zhou took an occasional ideological detour and was not able to keep in perfect step with Mao Zedong. For this reason, the difference of opinion between Mao Zedong and Zhou Yang was trivial. The reason this difference of opinion occurred, in terms of thought processes, lay in the different work carried out by a political leader and an ideologue. If we say that the former stressed the practical political purpose of literature and art to the point of considering this the only function of literature and art, thereby forgetting the qualitative distinction that Marx drew between art, on the one hand, and practice/spirituality (including politics), on the other, then we must also say that the latter was a bit bookish. He tried hard to make literature and art somehow separate from politics. He tried to prevent literature and art—this slave—from losing her

beauty even as she served politics. That is what they call "teaching a lesson in an entertaining way." The "entertainment" of which this phrase speaks is the function of appreciating beauty. That is to say, Zhou Yang was not necessarily unwilling to abide by the Yanan program; it was just that, after many years of work, he came to feel that the program was unworkable. It was only for this reason that he began to wonder whether it might not be possible to walk along the road in another posture. The only reason Zhou Yang proposed enhancing the ability of literature and art to appreciate beauty by "depicting the truth (portraying the truth)" was in order to better carry out the spirit of the *Talks*. However, Mao Zedong did not see it this way. In everything, his central focus was politics. This way of looking at all social and cultural phenomena as political phenomena led to "allergies," and manifested itself in the realm of theory as a tendency toward a sort of "word fetish." Any change in wording in any published literature was looked upon as a subtle harbinger of tremendous change. Thus, the *Talks* became sacred scripture, about which only superstitious faith, not doubt, was allowed. With respect to literature and art, you could talk only about what had already been talked about in the *Talks*, not about anything that had not been mentioned in the *Talks*, otherwise you would be using the excuse of temporal and spatial change to negate the historical continuity in socialism of the Yanan program, which would sully the purity of Mao Zedong Thought on literature and art. From the standpoint of formal logic, this inference by Mao Zedong was perhaps not without reason, because if one accepts the assumption that literature and art serve politics, then there is no way to conclude that appreciation of beauty is the real essence of literature and art. One can only conclude that the essence is the practical political purpose and utility of literature and art. Thus, it was logical for literature and art to slide from the "instrument" theory to the "substitution" theory. This was where Mao Zedong was superior. On the contrary, it was illogical to try to steer literature and art from the "instrument" theory toward the "appreciation of beauty" theory. The idea comes out of nowhere. It contradicts its own assumptions. Zhou Yang was doomed to suffer the tragedy of falling from favor.

The ill fate of Zhou Yang and Hu Feng was symbolic. It showed that the commandment that required adherence to the practical political purpose of literature and art had already become so sacred during the 17-year period prior to the Cultural Revolution that no one could touch it. It was the forbidden fruit. Anyone who dared taste it would be ejected from the Garden of Eden, regardless of whether one was a nonparty eminence or a celebrity within the party. In this way, the two big academic theatrical performances (starring Hu Feng and Zhou Yang) that had to do with the function of literature and art were turned for no reason at all into political dramas with endings so tragic that "ghosts wept and spirits mourned." Literature and art, which had lost all of their central essence in the labyrinth of politics, were even stripped of the last little thread of nostalgia for their

former function—the appreciation of beauty. That being the case, it is not difficult to understand how this group of writers, artists, and critics (ignorant as they were of the task of the times, searching like lovesick puppies for the laws of art) met with disaster. When literature and art were downgraded in the political marketplace to a sub-standard product, the writers, artists, and aesthetes who made their living in this milieu became worthless. Zhou Yang's fall on the eve of the Cultural Revolution signified the end of the "early lost period." If the "early lost period" was characterized by the pain felt by those astray in the labyrinth about what had been lost, then the entire period of the Cultural Revolution (the "latter lost period") was characterized by the fact that those astray in the labyrinth were so disoriented that they did not even know their condition. That was the greatest tragedy of all.

#### **The Latter Lost Period: The Effect of the Model Opera Principles on Development of Mao Zedong Thought on Literature and Art**

With respect to its logical structure, Mao Zedong Thought on literature and art should by all rights have included both the new democracy stage and the socialist stage, but in reality, the theoretical state of Mao Zedong Thought on literature and art, and its corresponding artistic models, remained mired in the new democracy stage during the years prior to the Cultural Revolution. It was still fundamentally a wartime artistic and political ideological trend whose theory was patterned upon the *Talks* and whose literary and artistic models were *Xiao Erhei Jiehun* [*Little Erhei Gets Married*] and *Bai Mao Nu* [*Girl With a White Feather*]. It is apparent that there was no real progress in Mao Zedong Thought on literature and art during the 10 years following liberation. I remember that the gang of four once proclaimed that several of Mao Zedong's "supreme instructions" should be included as key elements of Mao Zedong Thought on literature and art, including his "Letter to the Yanan Peking Opera House After Watching *Bi Shang Liang Shan* [*Forced Up Liang Mountain*]" "A Letter on the Subject of Research Into *Dream of the Red Chamber*," "A Discussion of *The Story of Wu Xun—A Movie Which Should Be Taken Seriously*," and "Two Comments on Literature and Art." However, this sage advice could not change the historical fact that Mao Zedong Thought on literature and art was lagging behind the changing times. Although all of these documents, except for the "Letter to the Yanan Peking Opera House," were written by Mao Zedong after liberation, in comparison with the *Talks*, which expounded directly on the wartime program, they were undeniably nothing more than a stack of highly influential but unstructured polemics. What is more, there was no outpouring at that time of new model works in the style of Zhao Shuli [6392 2885 3810]. It should be acknowledged that Zhou Yang bore some responsibility for the stagnant condition of Mao Zedong Thought on literature and art, because the task of developing Mao Zedong Thought on literature and art and bringing it into the socialist period was an important mission for the entire party. Because Mao Zedong, off in

Zhongnanhai, no longer had the time to pen lengthy tracts in the style of the *Talks*, this mission fell to Zhou Yang. Who would have expected this administrative official to be a bit "distracted." He was suspicious at best about whether the main priority under the new conditions was to uphold the Yanan program. To develop it was out of the question. The 17 years prior to the Cultural Revolution were thus wasted by Zhou Yang. Small wonder Mao Zedong complained bitterly in his *Summary* that "we learned our lesson too late." This causes people's thoughts to travel deep into the dark recesses of the background of that ideological trend and ask "Why was Mao Zedong so infatuated during the Cultural Revolution with the model opera?"

Some people blame Mao Zedong's enthusiastic promotion of the model operas on Jiang Qing's influence. That explanation is much too pedestrian. I believe that the reason why the model operas were so abnormally attractive to Mao Zedong was mainly that they satisfied a longstanding desire of his. The model operas used original creative principles and artistic patterns to uphold and develop Mao Zedong Thought on literature and art in a creative and nonrevisionist manner, and they raised it to the socialist stage.

There are two signs to indicate whether a particular theory has experienced development. The first is whether the ideological content has added any new topics. The second is whether the theory has been expressed with a higher degree of logical clarity than that which had been found previously. It should be said that Mao Zedong had not failed to devote some thought to the question of how socialist literature and art were to uphold the Yanan program. This line of thought, which traced an intermittent path across a span of 20 years (beginning with the "Letter to the Peking Opera House" and continuing through the "Two Comments on Literature and Art"), was sufficient to demonstrate Mao Zedong's concern for the issues described above. However, this line also demonstrated that Mao Zedong's thought process was intuitive. He tended to jump to conclusions, and he lacked a comprehensive structure. He only felt strongly and vaguely that the socialist revolution and the new democratic revolution were historical stages which were mutually interactive and coexistent, yet different at the same time. This determined that socialist literature and art, vis-a-vis wartime literature and art, should possess some characteristics that would mark them as the products of a new era, while remaining in other aspects the historical successors to wartime literature and art. If their position as historical successors meant that they had to uphold the Yanan program, then how were they to manifest their identity as the products of a new era? With respect to this question, Mao Zedong had only a fuzzy concept and lacked a clear conclusion. This concept was first revealed in his "Letter to the Peking Opera House in Yanan," in which he stated that the literary and artistic stage, as a miniature version of the political stage, should illustrate the enormous changes that had taken place in China's

social relationships. After the nationwide victory in the armed struggle for power, revolutionary literature and art had to chase from the stage all the emperors and militarists who symbolized the power elite of yesteryear, just as was done by the new historical drama *Forced Up Liang Mountain*. This had to be done in order to clear out some space in which to establish a glorious image for those returning in triumph, which would be promoted throughout the country once it had struck roots. Perhaps it was done with the intent of mating this image with the new political situation in China. It was for this reason that when the cinematic community produced *The Story of Wu Xun* and *Qing Gong Mishi* [*The Secret History of the Qing Palace*], Mao Zedong inevitably found these works disgusting. These two films neither depicted the people's revolution (that mover of mountains and agitator of the seas) nor portrayed the heroes of the Communist Party who had stood the world on its head. On the contrary, these films saved their highest praise or sympathy for Wu Xun, who begged for money in order to start a school, and the emperor Guang Xu, who had been forced to carry out a program of reforms. Were they not going against Mao Zedong? Had the gentlemen not been aware that "the East was Red, and the sun was rising?" Or that the Celestial Kingdom had entered a new world? Why did they not sing the praises of the new regime? Why did they try to breathe life into a bunch of dead spirits from the Qing dynasty instead? Zhou Yang, who had countenanced the existence of the art of "talented scholars and beautiful women" and of "dead stiff and foreigners," also aroused Mao Zedong's ire. How was a person to produce a positive work of socialist literature or art without violating the original intent of the Yanan program while, at the same time, reflecting the significance of the new era? Mao Zedong himself had no clear answer. To be accurate, Mao Zedong was unable to produce a second *Talks* to take the topic of socialist revolution and reduce it to fit within a new system of artistic laws and principles. This was a blank spot in Mao Zedong Thought on literature and art which urgently needed to be filled in.

It was the model opera principles, over whose refinement Jiang Qing presided, that filled this blank spot. There were three principles of modern opera in all. The first was the "fundamental task" theory, which clearly stipulated that the fundamental task of socialist literature and art was to portray the classical proletarian hero. Mao Zedong had once hoped that socialist literature and art would be like a echoing wall which would resonate with the sounds of his own "cheerful panegyrics" to the revolution, but he never could find the appropriate aesthetic venue to serve as a vehicle for this main melody. What Mao Zedong failed to find, none other than Jiang Qing did find. She discovered the new element that would distinguish socialist literature and art from that of the new democratic period. The former did not, unlike the latter, need to emphasize description of the people's hardships or resistance. Its "fundamental task" was to vividly feel or praise the pride and feeling of grandeur that comes of ruling over the entire country.

This was demonstrated by putting the image of the proletarian hero in the position of highest importance. It is apparent that not only did the "fundamental task" theory firmly adhere to the position of the *Talks*, it also took the suspended yearning that was present in the "Letter to the Yanan Peking Opera House" and crystallized it into a gem with bright, crisp facets. In comparison, the "subject selection" theory of Lin and He in the 1950's was much more complex (for example: "you cannot write about the petty bourgeoisie," "you cannot write about the shortcomings of a hero," "you cannot write about family matters or love affairs," and so forth). This theory was not nearly as impassioned or forceful as the "fundamental task" theory. The other two principles of model opera were the "three highlights" theory and the "tall, big, complete" theory. They were coordinated with the "fundamental task" theory. If the "fundamental task" theory determined the direction of socialist literature and art, then the "three highlights" theory and the "tall, big, complete" theory were used to carry out the first theory with regard to plot structure and technique. Since the image of the proletarian hero was the central axis of socialist literature and art, all works had to focus attention on the positive characters from among the entire cast. Among the positive characters, the heroes had to be highlighted. Among the heroes, the spotlight had to be trained on the main hero. Only by relying on this pyramid-style "three highlights" structure could the main hero rise like the morning sun in the center of the stage, while the other people served to set the hero off all the more distinctly. This highly significant rule was absolutely the most ideal embodiment of the spirit of the Cultural Revolution. At the same time that it symbolized the awe-inspiring, "all-encompassing dictatorship," it also provided a typology for the art of the personality cult. In order to ensure that the number-one character would be "tall, big, and complete," the principles of model opera were also implemented at the level of technique. In an extremely painstaking manner, they declared that the most beautiful songs, choreography, and poses should be performed by the heroic central figure. The best lighting, props, and the most crucial scenes of theatrical conflict all had to be devoted to the hero, in order to accentuate his brilliance and make it eternal. I suspect that one would probably not find this type of artistic political science anywhere else in the world. This science was capable of evolving an entire set of new rules of creation from a political topic which originally had nothing to do with the appreciation of beauty. Not only did it provide extremely forceful guidance, its manipulative nature was extremely pronounced. Whether in terms of topic, structure, or technique, all one had to do was follow the instructions and one could manufacture one model opera after another.

It would not be so appropriate to regard Mao Zedong's willingness to make time in his busy schedule to enjoy the model operas as a bestowal of his highest commendation upon Jiang Qing. Rather, this was his pleased rejoicing over the way Mao Zedong Thought on literature and art had perfected itself. From that point on,

Mao Zedong Thought on literature and art no longer walked along on one leg (its new democracy part), but now had a second leg (its socialist part). The great meeting of forces that took place between Mao Zedong's *Talks* and Jiang Qing's model opera principles in the Cultural Revolution finally propelled Mao Zedong Thought on literature and art to its pinnacle. It was truly a case of strings of pearls and girdles of jade—a perfect match. Therefore, on the battlefield of the “literary and artistic revolution,” Jiang Qing was not merely Mao Zedong's student; she fully deserved recognition as his comrade-in-arms. I am not attempting to heap undeserved praise on her, but only respecting history.

Does one play down the role of Mao Zedong by saying that the model opera principles brought about further development of Mao Zedong Thought on literature and art? Not at all. In reality, the evolution of Mao Zedong Thought on literature and art from the *Talks* to the model opera principles spanned a period of more than 20 years. Looking at the phenomena, it appears that the only common thread running through that period was one of destructive theoretical purges. In reality, this destructive filtering action contained within itself a sort of constructive choice process. Destroy first, build later. Destruction is the main thing, but there is construction in its midst. This was the thought process of Mao Zedong. Nothing proves this point better than the following bit of history: When Zhou Yang took advantage of the “readjustments” after the 7,000-person meeting to go to the south and “mount a revolt,” Mao Zedong had already allowed Jiang Qing to get quietly involved in the “Peking Opera revolution.” When it came to developing Mao Zedong Thought on literature and art, “the old man” had a knack for shooting arrows both left and right. The left hand he used to carry out theoretical housecleaning, and his right hand he used to remake himself. Therefore, the model opera principles were established not only under the hovering attention of Mao Zedong, but also upon an ideological and political foundation which Mao Zedong was able to clean up only with the greatest difficulty. Much less is there any need to mention how, in the days when “revolutionary, modern Peking Opera” was being converted into model opera, Mao Zedong painstakingly assisted Jiang Qing in revising opera names, plots, and lyrics. One could say that although Jiang Qing's name was written on the flag of model opera, it was clearly permeated with the meticulous labor of Mao Zedong. Thus, when I describe the model opera principles as the ultimate expression of the developmental process of Mao Zedong Thought on literature and art, not only does this not minimize the leader's influence, it actually proves all the more effectively that since Mao Zedong Thought on literature and art, as an ideological trend in art and politics which had once occupied a ruling position, did not belong totally to Mao Zedong, then neither could its development be totally controlled by Mao Zedong.

It would not hurt to review a bit of history in order to get a clearer picture. The model opera principles, as the

biggest piece of “heavy equipment” in Mao Zedong Thought on literature and art, enjoyed unsurpassed authority during the Cultural Revolution. Just like the sayings of Mao Zedong, they became absolute law in Chinese literary circles. Any opera which was not able to observe these principles right down to the finest detail was not allowed to be performed. Some say that Boileau's “de l'Art poetique” was the aesthetic law of the cultural dictatorship of feudal France. The Empress of the Red Capital, who reached the throne astride the model opera principles, “executed” nearly 100 films in a single breath in order to assist in a nationwide movement to “burn the books and bury the scholars.” This more closely resembled the style of the first emperor of Qin than did the very actions of the first emperor himself. In this regard, the annals of foreign history are not worth a mention!

The reason why the model opera principles brought unprecedented catastrophe to the Chinese literary scene is that these principles were meant from their inception to recognize the manipulation or exploitation of art by politics. This has to do with the subtle relationship between model opera and the contemporary theatrical repertoire. It should be acknowledged that the appearance of contemporary Peking Opera and contemporary ballet in the early 1960's was not without positive significance for renewing the oldest form of stage art anywhere in the East or West, and transforming it into a vehicle for contemporary themes, even though the motive for this artistic renovation may not have been related to art. Perhaps it was this narrow motive which later became the political basis for the silent acquiescence to the havoc wrought upon art by Jiang Qing. Let us take the opera *Shajiabang* as an example. The Peking Opera *Shajiabang* was a reworking of the Shanghai Opera *Ludang Huozhong* [*Sparks From the Reed Marsh*]. The leading character in *Sparks From the Reed Marsh* was Ah Qing Sao, an underground party member. Her dealings and conflicts with Hu Chuankui and Diao Deyi, two villains with extraordinary personalities, formed a primary plot line which weaved brilliantly between comedy and serious drama and forced the audience at times to roll with laughter and at times to feel agony. Its aesthetic ambience was quite strong. Unfortunately, it went stale after it was converted into a model opera. The armed struggle, which originally was treated as a secondary story line, was not content with its lowly position, and vied to become the main plot. The fully armed Guo Jianguang burst unstoppably from the reed marshes, fought his way directly into *Shajiabang*, and destroyed Ah Qing Sao's main story line. The result was that a perfectly fine piece of theater was torn to pieces. It failed to cultivate the character Guo Jianguang, the hero who walked the line of Mao Zedong's armed struggle, yet it pushed Ah Qing Sao (this approachable, respectable, believable, and strong woman) off to one side. This was done because she was engaged in work in the white territory which had been directed by Liu Shaoqi. Were they doing art, or reenacting *Guanchang Xianxing Ji* [*The Sordid State of Affairs in the Halls of Power*, a book



which exposed corruption in the last years of the Qing dynasty]? From *Sparks From the Reed Marshes* to *Shajiang*, this was the type of oppression that we observed—one in which politics played havoc with art. Furthermore, the model opera principles were the theoretical abstraction of this oppression, and it was precisely because of its abstraction that art's trembling and silent weeping under the burden of this oppression was completely distilled away. All that was left over were crisp, clear slogans. I can see that, even today, art continues to drip dirty blood.

It is worth noting that today's academic community seems to lack the courage to take the historical period just described and deal with it head on, and there is a one readily available example that illustrates this fact: *Dangdai Zhongguo Wenxue Sichao Shi* [*History of Ideological Trends in Contemporary Chinese Literature*], (People's Literary Publishing House, 1986). This sparkling, 400,000-character book deals separately with 30 years of postliberation history, separating the time into various periods. Surprisingly, it leaves out the Cultural Revolution entirely. Ten long years, down a black hole! When one considers the "unstable weather patterns" prevalent at the time the book was compiled, it would not be hard to forgive the editor if he had avoided the subject out of fear of violating taboo, but the problem arises from the editor's subterfuge. He stated that no chapter was devoted specifically to the Cultural Revolution because during those 10 years there was only political chaos—no ideological trends in literature and art. This is dumbfounding to anyone familiar with the facts. Everyone understands that "literary turmoil" did not begin with the Cultural Revolution. Back in the early 1950's, the "five knives" theory of Lin and He had rendered Chinese literature and art bleak and dreary. All Jiang Qing did in the Cultural Revolution was to take the farces and opera highlights which had been popular during the 17 years prior to the Cultural Revolution and string them together into a big exhibition. To be sure, from the standpoint of theory, Jiang Qing's model opera principles had much more flavor than the "five knives" theory of Lin and He. The "five knives" theory looked like notes taken mechanically by a bookworm poring over his textbooks—methodical, systematic, rigorous, and uninspired. The model opera principles, on the other hand, truly achieved the credo of incorporating Mao Zedong Thought on literature and art into one's everyday life. The model opera principles displayed a deep grasp of Mao Zedong Thought on literature and art, striving for the new while preserving the original soul. They were truly a miraculous blend. It is apparent that Jiang Qing truly had the deepest understanding of Mao Zedong Thought on literature and art, and thus she achieved a great discovery or creation. However, the original purpose remained the same despite countless changes. The differences between the "five knives" theory and the model opera principles was a matter of degree, and involved no qualitative difference. They were part of a single continuous line, and they also displayed characteristics that marked the period in the history of Mao

Zedong Thought on literature and art during which they appeared. From the perspective of the 30-year period following the founding of the nation, the absolute silence maintained by *History of Ideological Trends* about the Cultural Revolution severed the spiritual kinship between the 17-year period prior to the Cultural Revolution and the 10-year period during the Cultural Revolution. From the perspective of the history of Mao Zedong Thought on literature and art, this silence covered up the very phenomenon which marked the important second stage in the development of this ideology. From the perspective of the history of contemporary literary criticism, this silence artificially created a blank space, thereby cutting out the fundamental intermediate link between the 29-year "lost period" and the subsequent 11-year "searching period." This snapped the entire historical chain.

When I say that there ought to be an extremely key link between the "lost period" and the "searching period," I am referring primarily to the ideological trend of subversive literature and art, which Jiang Qing stirred up during the latter part of the Cultural Revolution. In terms of the relationship between Jiang Qing and Mao Zedong Thought on literature and art, she was truly a unique personage, somewhat in the mold of Xiao He [5618 0149]. In her hands hung the balance between success and failure. That is to say, the reason Mao Zedong Thought on literature and art was able to develop to its highest point was linked inextricably to the support lent by Jiang Qing's model operas and their creative principles. However, Jiang Qing's "subversive literature and art," whose effect was to turn Mao Zedong Thought on literature and art into an absurdity, launched it onto a downhill path. In a few short years, a single body of thought in literature and art fell from the peak, at which it commanded zealous faith, to the trough, in which it incurred only indifference and disgust. This is surely an event seldom seen in the history of human culture. Model opera and "subversive literature and art" appeared on the surface to be as different as night and day, but in spirit they were one. In terms of theory, they both upheld the practical political purpose of literature and art. The only difference was that "subversive literature and art" was more deeply anxious about the need to propagate the "instrument" theory of literature and art. "subversive literature and art" made literature and art crudely act out the meaning of "struggling against the capitalist roaders," which in the end caused literature and art to be all the more thoroughly replaced by politics, and to be smothered in the din of the careerists. Permit me at this point to replay history in slow motion in order to consider more closely how the "instrument" theory of literature and art wandered step by step into its blind alley. During the time it took to progress from the Yanan Talks to the "five knives" to the "model opera principles" to the "subversive literature and art," China experienced the War To Resist Japanese Aggression, the War of Liberation, the War To Resist U.S. Aggression and Aid Korea, socialist reconstruction, and the Cultural Revolution. The following

are, respectively, representative model operas from the various periods listed above: *Hong Deng Ji* [*Tale of a Red Lantern*], *Zhiqiu Weihu Shan* [*Taking Weihu Mountain by Strategy*], *Qixi Baihu Tuan* [*Sneak Attack Against the White Tiger Regiment*], *Hai Gang* [*Harbor*], *Longjiang Song* [*Ode to Longjiang*], and the "subversive" films *Fanji* [*Counterattack*] and *Huanteng de Xiaolianghe* [*Swiftly Flows Xiaoliang River*]. Perusing this series of works, one notes a two-directional cycle involving two different functions, whose roles grow or decline in inverse proportion to each other. As the practical political function of art gradually grew, the aesthetic function of art declined, and even shrank to nothing. In contrast, any slight diminution of the practical political function of art results in a slightly increased aesthetic function. The response elicited at theaters during the Cultural Revolution proves this point. Although *Tale of a Red Lantern* and *Taking Weihu Mountain by Strategy* were not without signs of their propaganda purpose, the nationalistic spirit and class sentiment that these films played up still struck responsive chords with the audience because these were feelings that they themselves had experienced. Watching *Harbor* or *Ode to Longjiang* was different. Those were clumsy illustrations of the principle of "taking class struggle as the key link." No matter how Fang Haizhen tried to stir up political passion, audiences could not bring themselves to hate Qian Shouwei. There were no true feelings here, only affected sentiment, and the role of aesthetic appreciation was even more diminished. As for films like *Counterattack* and *Swiftly Flows Xiaoliang River*, which directly portrayed "the struggle against capitalist roaders," they were so gauche as to nauseate. Every line elicited thundering, derisive laughter. This was not appreciation of beauty, but appreciation of ugliness. It was the passing of judgment on the repugnance of "subversive literature and art." Literature and art, which had lost their aesthetic function, split progressively finer political hairs (nationalist struggle, then class struggle, then struggle between political parties, then factional struggle). In the end, audiences were so boxed in they felt suffocated. This is an example of how the pendulum swings back when it has reached the extreme, or the negation of the negation. By simply allowing literature and art to be exploited by politics to the point where they were left without a stitch of clothing on actually achieved the effect of shocking traditional values. People could not help but burst forth in an uproar. Since literature and art had been squeezed to the point where no art remained, was the orthodox concept that "literature and art are subordinate to politics" actually so orthodox? Although it was "subversive literature and art" which poked the hole in the theory, the seeds of the revived scientific way of thought had been laid much earlier. "subversive literature and art" only brought to the surface, by means of extreme farce, an anti-aesthetic tendency buried deep in Mao Zedong Thought on literature and art. It is like water, which does not turn to steam until it reaches 100 degrees Celsius. This physical property, locked inside the molecular structure of water, is unwilling to manifest itself at room

temperature. It is only willing to turn from liquid to gas if one lights a fire under it. Jiang Qing's "subversive literature and art" was precisely the catalyst that brought the unscientific core of Mao Zedong Thought on literature and art plainly into the light of day.

#### **The Period of Search: New-Wave Literature and Reappraisal of Mao Zedong Thought on Literature and Art**

As incredible as it may seem, during the 29 years spanned by the early and latter "lost period," the Chinese literary community almost did not even mention the question of the nature of literature and art, let alone explore the issue systematically. The purpose of new-wave literature is precisely to explore the nature of literature and art. The first step it took was to attempt to free literature and art from the apron strings of politics. The birth of the new-wave literature means the arrival of a period of reappraisal of Mao Zedong Thought on literature and art. This must necessarily owe its birth in large part to the great historical backdrop of "ideological liberation." This was a contradiction between two laws, one of scholarship, the other of politics. On the one hand, the thrust of new-wave literature was to free literature and art from their subordination to politics. On the other hand, however, new-wave literature (which advocated artistic independence) could not but depend on political opening up. The result was that the more tenaciously new-wave literature insisted on aesthetic independence, the more deeply it became involved in political conflict. This was truly a difficult political birth. The pain of fighting its way out of its mother's womb caused it to seize up in spasmodic convulsions. Small wonder, given the way the fetus had been entangled in the umbilical cord! A significant portion of new-wave literature suffers from these nonacademic convulsions. However, new-wave literature does indeed have its own little kingdom of "pure scholarship." Metaphorically speaking, in order to search along every avenue for the aesthetic nature of literature and art, new-wave literature basically sent its troops out along two different routes to carry out simultaneous explorations. One route was the main-body concept. The other route was ontology. The main-body concept is that the nature of literature and art be approached through the research and the studies on the main body by the writers and artists. Since literature and art, as the object of aesthetic appreciation, are the spiritual offspring of writers and artists, and since the process of literary and artistic creation takes place in the minds of writers and artists, then it would undoubtedly help us to delve into the nature of literature and art if we gained a clear picture of the subjects themselves—writers and artists. It is like knowing a person. If you become familiar with his parents, the way he was raised, and the position of his family in society, your understanding of the person himself will be much clearer. Ontology, on the other hand, stresses the key elements in the creative process, not the final work. Works of literature and art, as the existential state of literature and art, should by all logic be the most ideal vehicle of their nature. Therefore, ontology advocates penetrating the



nature of literature and art through textual research. The main-body concept and ontology are traveling along different paths, but they are closely linked in spirit. Do not be deceived by their appearance (so placid you would think them forever ensconced in books and libraries); in reality, they have percolated into methodologies, concepts, and academic disciplines, and are now vying on a deep level for supremacy with the literature that has so far been the most popular. It has launched a comprehensive academic reappraisal of Mao Zedong Thought on literature and art.

The core of Mao Zedong Thought on literature and art is its insistence on the practical political function of literature and art. This determined that its research methodology would go from the concept of recognizing the simple and the unadorned to a mediocre sort of sociology. Because literature and art were only stagehands in the theater of politics, the authorities naturally had the right to instruct them to correct the angle from which they looked upon life. Furthermore, because politics were in fact quite "revolutionary," and "revolutionary" had long been another word for "science" and "truth," they could not help falling into superstitious belief that the scenes which met their eyes, tinted red by the lens of politics, were reality itself. Thus, with respect to aesthetics, they inevitably looked upon literature and art as if they were a matter of writers and artists merely capturing or portraying information about reality. In the words of Mao Zedong, literature and art are the products of social life as reflected in the conceptual state which exists in the minds of writers and artists. Precisely because the methods of the literature that has heretofore been in vogue are still bogged down at the level of "action-reaction," it is inevitable that the faction that would search for hidden meaning of a literary work would sprout up in literary and artistic criticism, in which people would search out a simple one-to-one correspondence between works of literature and art and the social and political setting out of which they arise. *Liu Zhi Dan* was branded an antiparty novel for this reason. *Hai Rui Ba Guan* [*Hai Rui Dismissed From Office*] was unjustly accused of trying to "overturn the verdict on the rightist opportunists." At the slightest trace of evidence, people "grabbed at the wind and lunged at shadows," that is, the witch hunt was on. People were on edge, and there was no peace in the nation. How could this be called literary or artistic research? It was clearly nothing more than mediocre sociology. Precisely because such a brutal experience existed in people's memories, the "methodology theory craze" of 1985 was directly ignited when someone introduced the systematic methods of an academic discipline in analyzing the structure of the Ah Q personality. In the blink of an eye, a plethora of 20th-century Western humanities and even natural sciences flooded into China, including information theory, control theory, systems theory, theory on phenomena, theory on symbols, interpretation theory, cultural philosophy, comparative literature, structuralism, and so forth. There was an explosion of new terms about which people had only a vague understanding.

Some terms were a mystery to everyone. After the smoke cleared, although no imposing new theory had arisen, traditional architecture built on old familiar ground was already beginning to crumble.

The vanguard had a strong spirit of self-sacrifice, because its mission was not to build itself up, but to shake up the established order in the academic community in order to stimulate skepticism or contempt of traditional authority. They were the street sweepers. The atmosphere which they established, in which people had the courage to be unconventional, has provided valuable psychological preparation and methodological resources for the overhaul of concepts and expansion of academic disciplines by those who are yet to come. For example, the literature which is now popular pays no attention to the subject. When creative method and world view came to be viewed as the same thing, the question of whether a writer or artist was capable of putting out a good piece of work turned on whether he or she had a good "guiding ideology." Issues relating to the thoughts, inspiration, passions, temperament, and concept of subject of writers and artists were forgotten by the literature which had previously been popular. Furthermore, due to the comeback of humanism in the new period, it soon became apparent to those in the recently revived school or thought that if, in the process of creation, one did not study the nature of the writer or artist as subject, it would be the same as having done nothing. However, this newly born concept of subject was itself in urgent need of being ordered and interpreted by the methods of modern psychology. Only in this way could it extract from a sort of primordial empiricist description a conceptual system with clear content and crisply defined boundaries. The result was the reestablishment of the discipline of literary and artistic psychology. By the same token, the numen of literature was a new concept even more unfamiliar to the literature which had been in vogue before. The independence of literature and art from politics not only afforded universal recognition of the subject nature of writers and artists; it also won a special place for the numena of literary and artistic works in the aesthetic domain. There is a cluster of new topics (media, sentence groups, narrative models, and literary revolution) related to the numena of literary and artistic works which need to be developed through coordinated use of semantic philosophy, structuralism, and interpretation theory in hopes of creating literary linguistics or an ontology of literature and art, which are unprecedented in the history of Chinese literature. Only by undergoing the baptism or purification of well-coordinated scientific methods can it achieve self-sufficient logic, that is, only in this way can it gel into a theory or even a discipline, thereby standing stably on its own feet. That is to say, the highest form of historical substitution of new literature for old is the expansion or eclipsing of a discipline. The manner in which a new literature replaces an older one is not a matter of clumsily setting a torch to an old set of "literary principles" which had been popular for years; rather, it is a matter of rational competition between new and old literatures. Only when the new literature has

clearly surpassed the old one in terms of logical structure, conceptual system, cultural field of vision, and linguistic expression, and when it has won over more and more converts while the old camp shrinks, will the old literature be sent on a historic stroll to the museum of history to be put on display next to the bronzes.

New-wave literature is carrying out a thoroughgoing inspection of Mao Zedong Thought on literature and art in the areas of methodology, concepts, and academic discipline. This will have two effects. 1) With respect to Mao Zedong Thought on literature and art, its historical reappraisal has undeniably been extended to the level of academic scholarship, unlike the May 4th Movement, which lightly rejected many quintessential aspects of Chinese culture. 2) With respect to new-wave literature, it is apparent that it has awakened an awareness of the independent nature or dignity of theory. It is fine if literature, as a type of scientific thought, describes and reveals things related to its object, but it should not go out of its way to accept political purchase orders, or involve itself with servile footnotes, mud slinging, or defenses. That is to say, literature should cease to serve as special ideology troops for the state. Literature and art are science. Science is an untiring and never ending attempt to explore or approximate truth, so literature should not recognize the absolute authority of anything whose truth has not been proven, nor should they recognize any forbidden territory which is not allowed to be disproved. Even an idolized object like Mao Zedong Thought on literature and art, which reigned like a colossus over half a century, should, in keeping with the spirit of seeking truth from facts, be an object of analysis. It also had its own genesis and theoretical origins, and played a role. Nevertheless, it was also a heavy legacy whose reappraisal came about at much too high a cost. Although history cannot possibly skirt its shadow, those with a will to do it are trying hard to walk out from under the shadow. Furthermore, when literature throws off its role of political conspirator and recovers its function as a system of aesthetic thought, literary critics will not deign to serve as imperial writers, but will prefer the anonymity of the library. Their books and theories will no longer emanate from political obedience, but from self-fulfillment or from a search for truth—the highest necessity in human life. He will no longer fear the reaction of others to his writings, but only obey the processes or proofs of scientific logic. The writer will no longer care whether what he writes will become a hot item in the political marketplace, but will be happy to wait in silence for the cleansing or inspection of ideological history. He will also be loath to grab the spotlight, cutting deals and concluding alliances. History shows that no militarist or politician who has been heavily involved in factional infighting, and even resorted to political power to do people in, has hardly ever been able to write anything good. The writer will absolutely “refuse to join factions.” It is the great pleasure of literary critics that they can work in air as pure as that in any scientific laboratory, and in a secluded artistic warren. This also represents the liberation of theory. Only by going

through the three stages of “literary self-awareness,” “theoretical independence,” and “personal liberation” will the Chinese literary community be able to produce an outstanding community of thinkers which is truly independent and not beholden to any power bloc. Herein lies the hope for the building of a modern Chinese literature.

### Rebuttal of ‘Essay’ Upholds Mao Zedong Thought

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[Article by Zhang Jiong (1728 3518): “Mao Zedong and the Literature of New China—On Criticism of the Essay ‘History Cannot Be Evaded’”; dated 8 August 1989]

[Text] The essay “History Cannot Be Evaded” (WENXUE PINGLUN, No. 4, 1989) purported to delve into the relationship between Mao Zedong Thought on literature and art and New China’s literature. In actuality, its true purpose was to distort and belittle Mao Zedong Thought on literature and art. It showed no respect for the forebears, nor did it respect historical fact. Many of the inferences bordered on the irresponsible, exposing a collection of inferior scholarship. It also reflected a recent noticeable trend within the arena of literary study, necessitating refutation.

Mao Zedong was a great statesman, military expert, theorist, and poet. Founder of New China, his historical practices and theories have for decades dominated and influenced New China’s destiny and have also deeply dominated and influenced its literature. He was a real giant produced by the great revolutionary era, leaving deep historical footprints, and he gave to mankind an impression that will be difficult to eradicate. His historical achievements and theories transcend international boundaries. As the future becomes history, in the context of the Chinese people’s great self-strengthening quest, Mao was not infallible. He matured through innumerable setbacks; his limitations in thought and understanding made some errors inevitable. Nevertheless, we cannot deny that, in the international Communist movement, in the process of the struggle of the proletariat and oppressed peoples for liberation, he was the most perceptive thinker, the boldest and most spirited, as well as the most talented thinker since Marx, Engels, and Lenin.

The literature of New China was developed predominantly under Mao Zedong’s influence. Therefore, its tortuous path, its rises and falls, its glorious achievements and agonizing setbacks are inseparable from the historical practices and theories of Mao Zedong. Despite his death, the influence of his and letters remains untouched to this day. In this sense, we cannot reflect upon 40 years of New Chinese literature without examining the historical accomplishments and theories of Mao Zedong, and, when we examine the gains and losses of such literature, we are to a certain extent examining those accomplishments and theories as well.

In such examination, we must respect historical fact and proceed from the viewpoint of historical materialism. At the same time, we must hold a lofty thinking process based on 40 years of socialistic literary accomplishments and modern scientific achievements. We must not distort history, nor should we be excessive in laying down historical conditions of our predecessors and ignore the actual limitations and perplexities they faced.

In such examination, we must also look at the connection and disconnection between Mao Zedong's arts and letters and his achievements, as well as those between his literary thought and Marxism. Finally, we must study this kind of relationship between him and the accomplishments in New Chinese literature. If we do not do so, then we are indeed comparing apples to oranges and will be hard-pressed to find the truth from the facts in our analysis and assessment.

### **I. The Historical Sources of Mao Zedong's Thought on Literature and Art and the Core of His Theories**

As with the overall concept of Mao Zedong Thought, his literary thought is the coalescence of Marxism and China's revolutionary achievement.

The substance of Mao Zedong thought on literature and art is found in the following works: *New Democracy*; *Talks at the Yanan Forum on Arts and Literature*; *On Correctly Dealing With the Internal Contradictions of the People*; *Talks at the CPC Conference on Propaganda Activities in China*; *Discussions With Those Engaged in Musical Activity*, etc. In addition, there are a number of letters, directives, notes and comments, and guest editorials. The *Summary of the Meeting on Work in the Military in Literature and Art*, which had been convened by Jiang Qing at the request of Lin Biao, had been revised three times by Mao Zedong and can also be seen as a reflection of his literary thought. Of the above, the one that illustrates the most systematic, influential and all-encompassing work is the *Talks at the Yanan Forum on Arts and Literature*. It can be considered the literary offering that is the guiding principle for the rest, and it can also be said to be the classic offering with great historical significance in development of Marxist literary theory.

Mao Zedong Thought on literature and art was developmental as historical achievement pushed on. Mao Zedong transcended the two historical periods of democratic and socialist revolutions and establishment. Dissimilar social structure and historical accomplishments result in the rise of dissimilar theoretical views. One only has to compare the *Yanan Forum* with the *Summary* to see changes in Mao Zedong's literary views in 20 years. These changes tie in with Mao Zedong's views of the cohesion of socialist reality, revolutionary goals and his understanding of missions of the future. But his thoughts have their own core. The article "History Cannot Be Evaded" sums up Mao Zedong Thought on literature and art as having lost the basic aesthetic appreciation of literature. In a word, he considered the core of Mao's

literary thought as "firmly subordinate to politics, overwhelmingly emphasizing literature's functions in politics, forgetting that the basic nature of literature is an appreciation of beauty."

This kind of judgment, if not deliberately distorting, is at least guilty of thoughtless misunderstanding. To say that Mao Zedong "subordinated literature to politics" is correct. But the claim that he had "forgotten that the basic nature of literature is appreciation of beauty" is wrong.

Not only was Mao Zedong a statesman, but he was a well-read literary scholar and was a poet who had written many universally acclaimed beautiful poems. Anyone who has carefully read the *Talks at the Yanan Forum* would easily see the great importance Mao attached to the aesthetic consideration of literary arts. He had said, "While both real life and artistic works are beautiful, the life reflected by artistic works should be better than that in actuality, should be more intense and concentrated, more typical, more idealistic, and, thus, even more universal." Of course, Mao Zedong did emphasize that, in today's world, literature must be subordinate to defined political parameters, but he did not in the least ignore the artistic nature of literary works. He listed two criteria for critiquing literature: "One is a set of political standards, one is a set of literary standards." He said, "There is no author who does not consider his own work beautiful. Our critique must allow free competition among various kinds and flavors of works, but accurately judge them according to scientific artistic standards, so that works that are low-grade may gradually elevate into higher ones." he also said, "What we seek is an integration of politics and art, of content and form, and of revolutionary political content and artistic form to the extent possible. No matter how politically advanced, works that lack artistry are weak." Does this harbor a glimmer of neglect of any appreciation of basic aesthetics?

The aesthetic function of art is created from an oblique amalgamation of realism, goodness, and beauty. Mao Zedong attached great importance to this. When he sought to promote the flowering of science and art through the "let a hundred flowers bloom, let a hundred school of thought contend," it was with a view toward letting the best develop through coexistence and comparison between the real, the good, and the beautiful with the false, the bad, and the ugly, and their struggle and development. He also considered important the manifestation of aesthetic appreciation through the portrayal of images. In his letter discussing poetry to Chen Yi, he noted that "poetry must always keep imagery in mind," criticizing the Song dynasty poets as largely not understanding the need to do that, violating the principles of those of the Tang dynasty. Thus the Song works taste like 'chewing wax.'"

We can thus see that the allegation that Mao Zedong Thought on literature and art "misplaced appreciation of aesthetics" lacks foundation. Admittedly, Mao did

rather heavily stress the subordination of literature to politics. But in actuality, all the artistic works in the world reflect politics and are subordinated to politics. But in his time, when the people's struggle and class struggle were acutely in progress, when people were still uncertain which way the political balance was tipping, pointing out that literature of the time must be subordinate to a definite political class is not without historical causes and bases. After the establishment of New China came the formulation that "literature must serve proletarian politics," even to the extent of demanding that it complement the central mission of the party: Write about the center, draw it, sing it. This did not necessarily come directly from Mao Zedong, but was a rather vulgar sociological explanation that tended to be "left-leaning" of the topic of "literature must be subordinate to politics." Even so, Zhou Yang [0719 2254], the leading interpreter of Mao Zedong Thought on literature and art at the time, repeatedly stressed opposition to the tendency of literature to become "formulistic and deal in generalities," promoting the integration of artistic image and revolutionary political content.

It goes without saying that were Mao Zedong not a literary scholar he would not have been able to delve deeply and comprehensively into the study of literature. His dealing with the question of literature was as the highest social revolutionary and literary strategist, using basic Marxist principles to resolve a series of major fundamental problems in the achievements of China's revolutionary literature, and thus forging solid bases for the literary policy of the party and for the development of socialist literature. Of course, he was constrained by the times and overemphasized the political functions of literature and its subordination to politics, but the core of his literary thought included such facets as literature and the people, literature and reality, literary and tradition to diagnose materialism and historical materialism as the heart of a theoretical basis. Not everything sprang from "literature subordinated to politics." Mao Zedong Thought on literature and art is the heir and expansion of that of the forebears of proletarian revolution, Marx, Engels, Lenin, et al. Yet, it is also the rich with the tradition of China and the flowering of China's revolutionary literary accomplishments.

Deeply impressed in the literary thought of Mao Zedong is historical materialism as the people's view of history, of class schism and class struggle, of economic foundation and ideology at the upper stratum, of the final analysis and explanation of materialism, of the development of things, of contradiction and struggle, of subject reflecting object. His view that "literature is subordinate to politics" is not without link to the tradition of "literature spreads the way" of several thousand years of literary China. More important, he viewed politics as the "concentrated manifestation of economics" and the "medium" between the upper strata ideology and the economic base. Logically speaking, literature and art as upper strata ideology suspended in midair not only reflects politics, but also law, morality, religion, philosophy, and aesthetics. Where "literature is subordinate to

politics" fails to move is the gap between the ideology of aesthetic appreciation and that of the upper strata. It is apt from time to time to be at odds with the considerations of economic bases, political considerations, moral training, legal requirements, philosophical compositions, and more general aesthetic values. Superior works in arts and letters do not follow economic foundations and change or disappear. Besides, such works are not likely to reflect politics nor be diluted due to political requirements. For example, a carved vase, a piece of light music, a love poem, a scrolled painting of nature, and so forth. But there are works in all times that do reflect politics. This is also true. The constraints of aesthetic appreciation do not stand in the way of its varied functions, including inclination toward politics, any more than do philosophy, religion, ethics, and so on. This can be proved by the complete history of literature.

In speaking of the literature of New China, it is true that the concept that "literature is subordinate to politics" limited literary creativity and expansion, and fostered the conceptualization and formulation of works tending to be malignant pieces. And, later, it paved the way and provided grounds of argument for the Cultural Revolution's gang of four and its "conspiracy literature." We need not even discuss "literature must serve politics" as a topic.

But, after examining 40 years of the literature of New China, Mao Zedong's views are still proven to be correct and remain universal truths for the development and glorification of socialist literature: That literature must serve all the people, and first and foremost it must serve the worker, the peasant, and the soldier; it must solve and promote analytical viewpoints; the subject of literary creativity must try hard to have a world view; it must be in harmony with the thoughts and feelings of the people; it must delve deeply into life; it must not only utilize creative sources but must build new ones; it must go past the typical and create works even better than real life to stimulate others and revise its own views. While it is important to be creative, it is also important to be critical, to note and develop struggles between two battle lines, that is, oppose artistic works that contain counter-revolutionary ideas, and also oppose good but unartistic views; it must "let a hundred flowers bloom, let a hundred schools of thought contend," and "use the ancient for the present, use the foreign for China," yet oppose bourgeois liberalism, oppose simply stealing foreign artistic doctrine; that songs of praise should be sung of the day and exposure of the night—"all the dark forces that harm the masses must be exposed, all that concerns the revolutionary struggle of the masses must be celebrated in song," etc.

To distort the meaning of Mao Zedong Thought on literature and art, and then summarily dismiss it as having "lost its way" in theory is audacious indeed, but it will not convince a reader who respects truth.



## II. The First Seven Years: Setting the Foundation of New Chinese Literature

From the birth of the Chinese People's Republic, or just shortly before that, at the First National Conference of Artists and Writers where delegates from both the united and liberated areas met, to the summer of 1956 until spring of 1957 when literary creativity reached its first peak, these are the glorious seven years in which New China completed the socialist makeover and carried out the First 5-Year Plan. This was also when New China's literature turned from war to peace and opened up a new look within the borders of the country, gradually flourishing. In this period, arts and letters did encounter some tortuous paths, and Mao Zedong successively initiated studies of the movie *Saga of Military Training*, and *Dream of the Red Chamber*, and a massive assessment of the literary thought of Hu Feng [5170 7364], but Mao Zedong Thought on literature and art in its entirety acted actively upon the formulation and founding of our country's socialist literature.

In the transition from a personal ownership system to one of collective ownership and ownership by all the people, the deep changes in the economic base meant that the socialist materialistic culture and spiritual culture, including arts and letters, must essentially satisfy the growing demands of the people. Literature broadly expresses the life and struggles of the people, their thoughts and feelings, and it must serve the people, let people enjoy it. This is the notable and historical difference from that of feudalism and capitalism. And the successive split from ideologies based on private ownership, continuously expanding the territory of socialist thought, establishing socialism's new direction, new morality, new concepts, and new sentiments is another key difference between the arts and letters of socialism and that of feudalism and capitalism. Service to the people and to socialism is not only the guiding direction for socialist arts and letters, but is also the major measurement of its accomplishments.

Mao Zedong Thought on literature and art acted importantly upon the literature of New China in the above areas.

At the start of New China, land reform was imminent, and the vital missions of Resisting U.S. Aggression and Aiding Korea and revival of the national economy, followed and responded by pushing toward comprehensive reform of the social system, which also created changes in the entire ideological thoughts and sentiments and social psychology arenas. This was a time of selected revival of neglected tasks, of discarding or changing the old for the new. It was also a period of acute and complex class struggle both in and out of the country. Speaking according to fact, the setting of New China's literature in the direction of service to the people and to socialism was an inevitable result of socialist reform, and also an inseparable part of the ideology of the time. But the

existence of Marxist literary thought and Mao's literary thought definitely made it smoother going to set the course in that direction.

Mao Zedong's *Talks at the Yanan Forum on Arts and Letters*, after publication in 1942, had already exerted broad influence not only in the liberated areas, but in the entire nation to become the guiding principles for revolutionary and progressive authors and artists. It expanded upon Lenin's views about "art belongs to the people" and "we must always keep in mind the worker and the peasant," clearly pointing out the "worker-peasant-soldier" direction to be taken by arts and letters, stressing that it must serve the people on the "broadest scale," explaining that "90 percent of the population is made up of workers, peasants, soldiers, and urban petit bourgeoisie." Our arts and letters then must "serve these four groups." This is clear, black and white. But the article "History Cannot Be Evaded" debases Mao Zedong Thought on literature and art and alleges that it had "lost its way." It distorts things by saying that a more accurate definition of the "worker-peasant-soldier" direction should be "first and foremost for the peasant," creating something out of nothing, taking a step backward, demanding accusingly why didn't Mao Zedong "treat all alike and promote arts and letters as to serve the urban petit bourgeoisie and intellectuals as well?" This is strange to the extreme because, in explaining the service to the broadest base possible, Mao Zedong never tired of stating, "First, for the workers; this is the class leading the revolution. Then for the peasants; they are the stoutest and most numerous ally in the revolution. Then the armed workers and peasants that make up the 8th Route Army, the New 4th Army, and all the other armed forces of the people; these are the main force of the revolutionary war. Fourth come the urban petit bourgeoisie, the laboring masses, and the intellectuals; these are allies of the revolution, they can cooperate with us in the long-term. These four groups constitute the majority of the Chinese people and the broadest mass of people."

From the above, one can see that Mao Zedong was not original in promoting service to the people and service to the worker-peasant-soldier. His original contribution is that he went from theory to practice in analyzing and resolving how arts and letters would serve the broadest masses and the worker-peasant-soldier. This required the author to coalesce with the masses and probe deeply into the life and struggles of the masses. Authors should stand with the masses and the proletariat, should continuously revise their view of the world to fit the new times. They should breathe the same air as the people in their thoughts and feelings and share a common destiny. Authors should satisfactorily resolve the relationship between "source" and "flow." They should promote and disseminate, should resolve the link between creativity and criticism, etc. The accomplishments of the arts and letters of New China have testified to the departure from the old by having resolved such issues and assuming a new face, and have really embarked upon the historical

functions of serving the people and socialism. From 1949 to 1957, Mao Zedong first proposed the war slogan, "let a hundred flowers bloom, discard the old for the new," as a guiding principle; then came "let a hundred flowers bloom, let a hundred schools of thought contend," actually thus serving to boost the flourishing of arts and letters. In a short seven years, whether in the unified or liberated areas, middle-aged and older authors were able to come out with many good works, and nurtured a group that later became young authors of New China literature. In poetry and sonnets, Ai Qing [5337 7230], Tian Jian [3944 7035], Zang Kejia [5258 0344 1367], Guo Xiaochuan [6753 1420 1557], He Jingzhi [6320 2417 0037], Wen Jie [2429 2212], Zhang Zhimin [1728 1807 3046], Gong Liu [0361 0491], Li Ying [2621 3841], Yen Zhen [0917 7109], and others came out repeatedly with superior work. Novels such as Liu Baiyu's [0491 4101 5038] *The Flame Before Us*, Liu Qing's [2692 7230] *Impenetrable*, Sun Li's [1327 3680] *A First Record of Storm*, Zhao Shuli's [6392 2885 3810] *Three Mile Bay*, as well as shorter works that caught the eye by Li Zhun [2621 3294], Jun Qing [1498 7230], Ma Feng [7456 3536], Wang Wenshi [3769 3080 4258], Wang Yuanjian [3769 1959 1017], Wang Meng [3769 5536], Lu Wenfu [7120 2429 1133], Liu Shaotang [0491 4801 2768]; dramas such as Lao She's [5071 5287] *Glassy Gully and Tea House*, Xia Yan's [1115 5888] *Test*, Cao Yu's [2580 4417] *Clear and Bright Sky*, An Bo's [1344 3134] *Spring Wind Has Blown to Nuomin River*, Hu Ke's [5170 0668] *Growing Up in Battle*, Chen Qitong's [7115 0366 6639] *Endless Waters and Hills*, Yang Lufang's [2799 1462 2455] *The Cuckoo Bird Cries Again* all deeply and firmly grasped the life of the people and their struggles as reflected in their works, demonstrating the rich initial achievements in socialist literature. History has shown that the works of these authors have stood the test of time. Granted, this had to do with their own literary nurturing and experience, but it cannot be separated from the fact that they had followed the guidelines of Mao Zedong Thought on literature and art as well.

In this period, in the process of Marxism dominating thought, the criticisms of *Saga of Military Training*, *Dream of the Red Chamber*, and Hu Feng's literary thought were launched. Although twice previously there were leftist tendencies, on the whole it was correct not to handle the people involved at the time simply because of their ideological thinking. This impact can be said to be positive in the aspect of the main guiding thoughts. As to dealing with Hu Feng's literary thought criticism and counterrevolutionary struggle, putting Hu along with many other comrades and friends into a "counterrevolutionary conspiracy group" stemmed from the acute class struggle then going on in China and elsewhere with many-faceted complexities. But Mao Zedong could hardly shirk the blame for misapprehensions that were contradictory. His criticism of Hu's literary thinking and concluding that it was "left-leaning" and failing to be firm on the facts exerted passive influence upon the development of future literature.

Hu Feng was a literary theorist of the 1930's who had felt the influence of Marxism on the leftwing literary movement during the struggle in the nonliberated areas. On national form, he had been early influenced by the viewpoint of Lapu [2139 2528]. His realism was affected greatly by Lukaqi [4151 0595 1142]. In a number of areas, he preserved Mao Zedong Thought on literature and art but also had some differences. During the Chongqing and Hong Kong period, under the sponsorship of Zhou Enlai, the party helped Hu along, but criticized his incorrect viewpoints. To be fair, Hu's literary thought became systematized with merits and flaws. In 1953, he submitted to the party Central Committee an "Opinions Concerning Literary Questions" which reflected the main substance of his literary proposals. He attacked those points made by Mao Zedong that he said were the "five knives" that "doomed" literary enterprise: Mao's promotion of authors must practice Marxism, must coalesce with the worker-peasant-soldier, must rethink and create a different national form to be directed toward the heated revolutionary struggle, and must harmonize with the views required for the development of revolutionary arts and letters. It was therefore inevitable that there would be an intense battle to debate the fundamental nature of arts and letters.

While this battle of words touched many questions, the core was in the relation between subject and object in literary creativity.

Hu attached great significance to the role of the author in subjective creativity. He had a deep understanding of this and often stressed that an author must have a spirit of "a struggle between guest and host," and must be willing to "offer himself with total devotion," must undergo "self-expansion" and "self-struggle" to control the "life of the object or target." This is partially true, but he looked upon the "attitude of the author regarding life" and "self-expansion" as the "source of artistic creativity." Right at the start, this denies the existence of an object and slides toward subject idealism. He emphasized that the artistic achievements of the author have the function of changing the author's view of the world, contending that the "use of actual realism" could make up for "gaps in the author's world view." This is correct, but he also said it could make up for an author's "shortcomings in experience in life." Because of this, he opposed the author's practice of the Marxist view of the world and abhorred even more the deep involvement in life and struggle in collaboration with the workers, peasants, and soldiers. He opposed a position of "fixed topics," which is fine. But he also went on to say that "there is no variation in topic" because wherever there is life and struggle, there is poetry, denying that the topic itself has or does not have great significance, denying the necessity of the author to go deep into revolutionary struggle before he can be confident of handling an important topic. This is going off on a tangent. Aside from this, he proposed that nationalizing arts and letters must come from unique nationalistic thought and psychological processes. This is also correct, but then he



went on to take a nihilistic attitude toward China's classical literary tradition, completely denying folk literature, and bragged of "transplanted forms from the outside." This is wrong.

One can see that when the article "History Cannot Be Evaded" relegates such a controversy to a difference between Mao Zedong Thought on literature and art had let literature go off the path of aesthetic appreciation versus Hu's "preserving such appreciation," there is a lack of historical factual support. And this article makes fun of Mao's suggestions that authors practice Marxism, revise the view of the world to be "rationally creative," "revise first," that the "life of the people is the endless source" for arts and letters. It sarcastically demands to know "whether one would have creative freedom merely by getting some of the worker's sweat, the grime of the peasant, and the blood of the soldier on one's clothes?" It distorted the meaning of Mao's promotion of a nationalistic form of arts and letters as "continuing the traditional forms of folk literature, music, and techniques." Those who have seriously read Mao's works on this subject do not know whether to laugh or cry over such an irresponsible scholarly attitude and spiritually aristocratic flavor!

The subject versus object relationship of literary creativity may be a rather complex question, but, by using dialectical materialism as a perspective, its merits and flaws are clear. Man and society as subject, undergoing continuous acknowledgement and revision of the object, go through changes themselves. This is a basic fact permeating through the subject-object relationship in the history of all mankind. While one's consciousness can reflect and revise one's existence, at bottom, it reflects existence. "Man's consciousness follows man's conditions in life, man's relationship with society, and man's continuous changes in society." Therefore, in a time when a historically great reform occurs, asking that the author use the life of the people as a source, work hard to grasp a progressive view of the world, and change those thoughts and sentiments that do not fit in the new reality, and thus use his work to help the reader recognize the reality while supporting the reader's struggle to change the situation is entirely in conformity with historical logic and meets the proper demands of dialectical materialism. It is still correct looking at it today, and it meets the requirement of arts and letters being the essence of the ideology of aesthetic appreciation. To deny the correctness of Mao Zedong Thought on literature and art is to deny the correctness of the basic principles of Marxism. It can only put the literary and artistic creativity of the socialist times on to a wayward path. The later achievements of New China's literature also have proved this.

### III. The 10 Years Prior to the Cultural Revolution: A Watershed Period for the Literature of New China

The spring of 1957, which saw China move from rectification to an antirightist movement, was a major turning point in the history of New China. It was also a

major turning point in Mao Zedong's development of socialist doctrine. It exercised a deep and lasting influence on the development of China's socialist literature.

The 10-year period from 1957 to early 1966 (before the Cultural Revolution was launched) has been termed China's 10 years of "comprehensive building of socialism." The domestic environment and socialist practice during these 10 years enabled Mao Zedong to finally develop a body of theory for what was called "continuing revolution under the dictatorship of the proletariat."

The Eighth National Party Congress in 1956 had originally announced that the main domestic contradiction was between advanced relations of production and backward productive forces, not between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie. However, when the masses were mobilized in the spring and summer of 1957 to help the party in the course of its rectification movement, some statements with antiparty and antisocialist content were made, which caused Mao Zedong to feel strongly that class struggle continued to exist. At that point he launched an expanded antirightist struggle in which many people who were friendly to the party and socialism were also branded as rightists and treated as class enemies. Afterward, Mao Zedong made a great effort to build socialism with Chinese characteristics. He searched and explored for a new model by which the productive forces might be rapidly developed. He implemented communization and the Great Leap Forward, which sparked a dispute with Khrushchev, who was criticized as a revisionist. It also sparked a struggle to criticize right opportunism. During the three years of hardship, because Chiang Kai-shek was making noises about retaking the mainland and because of restlessness on the part of some landlords and rich peasants in coastal areas, Mao Zedong went further by proposing to "take class struggle as the key link" in 1962. In 1964 he brought forth the concept of "rural power holders who were taking the capitalist road." All of these leftist actions and theoretical tendencies exerted a heavy, distorting pressure on the normal development of New China's literature. Many writers, including ones who later proved to be outstanding, were branded one after another as "rightists," "right opportunists," and "revisionists." They were not allowed to write anymore. This group included Feng Xuefeng [7458 7185 1496], Ding Ling [0002 3781], Ai Qing [5337 7230], Ba Ren [1572 0086], Qin Zhaoyang [4440 0340 7122], Chen Yong [7315 8673], Wang Meng [3769 5536], and Liu Shaotang [0491 4801 2768]. The development of Mao Zedong Thought on Literature and Art during this period was clearly skewed to the left. The double hundred program was not earnestly carried out, and no one actually dared carry through on the policy of "applying foreign methods for China's benefit and applying ancient methods for present benefit" because criticisms were continually being launched on the ideological front, and because of severely worded directives from Mao Zedong regarding the various associations belonging to the Literary Union and the Ministry of Culture. He referred to the Ministry

of Culture as the "ministry of emperors and generals," the "ministry of gifted scholars and beautiful ladies," and the "ministry of dead stiff and foreigners." Later, with his support, Yao Wenyuan [1202 2429 0337] attacked "Hai Rui Dismissed From Office" for using the past to criticize the present, and for completely changing its content so as to engage in the "revolutionary modern opera" in a big way. The subject matter, themes, form, and style of literary creation all became narrower. Many writers dared not even take up their pens.

There were two other theoretical tendencies which exerted an important influence upon literature and art in this period. One was the introduction of the slogan about combining revolutionary realism and revolutionary romanticism. The other was a broad-brushed, nonanalytical criticism of human nature and humanism. There things were directly related to Mao Zedong and his thought on literature and art.

It was Gorki in the 1930's who first became dissatisfied with the old realism and advocated combining realism and romanticism. In the 1930's, when the Soviet Union affirmed the slogan of socialist realism, Zhdanov gave this public interpretation: "Socialist realism is the fundamental method of literary creation and criticism in the Soviet Union. It is a prerequisite that revolutionary romanticism be included as a part of literary creation." Mao Zedong in his *Talks at the Yanan Forum on Literature and Art* originally spoke of "realism of resistance against Japan and romanticism of resistance against Japan." Only later was this changed to "socialist realism." It is apparent that the intention at that time was to remain in step with the Soviet Union, because at that time socialist realism had become a universally accepted slogan of the international proletarian literary movement. After the founding of New China, Mao Zedong called upon the nation to "turn toward the Soviet Union" and "learn from the Soviet Union," so the literary community always used this slogan. Everyone was very aware that the term included the idea of revolutionary romanticism, because when Zhou Yang in the 1930's introduced this creative slogan in his writings, he clearly stated that "revolutionary romanticism does not stand in opposition to socialist realism, nor does it stand side by side with socialist realism. Rather, it is a proper and necessary factor that can be included within socialist realism and can enrich and develop socialist realism." In 1958, Mao Zedong called for the combination of revolutionary realism and revolutionary romanticism, which officially replaced the idea of socialist realism. There were two immediate circumstances related to this. One was the revision of this slogan by the Second Soviet Writers Congress of 1956 upon the proposal of Konstantin Simonov. The idea that "the truthfulness and historical concreteness of artistic description must be combined with the use of the socialist spirit for thought reform and for the task of educating the working people" was eliminated. Reactions among Chinese writers to this change were split. The second immediate circumstance was that the fanciful Great Leap Forward which then held China in its

grip and the zealous spirit of struggle demonstrated by the masses gave people hope that their ideals could be turned into reality within a very short time. Another circumstance also related (though less immediately) to the replacement of the slogan of socialist realism in China was the long, rich tradition of romanticism in Chinese literature. Many works truly demonstrated a combination, to different degrees, of realism and romanticism. From today's perspective, the proposal of "the combination of two" did not differ from the intent of the "socialist realism" slogan. It stressed making a distinction between itself and the old realism, especially critical realism. It stressed using a revolutionary world view to understand reality, stating that one must "base oneself upon actual development of the revolution to describe reality in a truthful, historical, and concrete manner." Of course, many famous writers and theorists at that time, including Guo Moruo [6753 3106 5387], Zhou Yang, and Mao Dun [5403 4163] did not interpret the "combination of two" in exactly the same way, and the "tendency to exaggerate" then rampant in actual practice abetted the growth of a "fake, large, empty" tendency to whitewash reality. Many works appeared that ran counter to realism. This was related to the skewed nature of artistic practice and cannot be blamed completely on the "combination of two" slogan, because among the works whose authors claimed to have written in accordance with the "combination of two" creative method were successful examples which were widely influential and enthusiastically received by readers. Two such works were *In Praise of the Red Flag* by Liang Bin [4731 2430], and part one of *Li Zicheng* by Yao Xueyin [1202 7185 0995]. The essay "History Cannot Be Evaded" claimed that "romanticism was taboo" to Zhdanov, and that only Mao Zedong "said what Zhdanov and the others wanted to but never did say." This only shows that the author of this article has never read the works of Zhdanov, and that he is completely ignorant of the historical roots of the idea of the "combination of two." Even more perplexing, he thinks that "Mao Zedong's combination of two represented a 'thorough overhaul' Zhou Yang's 'write the truth' theory." He claims that "the thrust of the combination of two was to clear up the aesthetic confusion caused by 'write the truth,' thereby plugging up every hole by which writers and artists since 1949 had escaped to express their unwillingness to give complete loyalty to the current body politic." Everyone knows that the "write the truth" theory was not proposed by Zhou Yang, but by Hu Feng. The "subjective fighting spirit" and "write the truth" were two major elements of Hu Feng's theory of realism, but "truthfulness," as understood by Hu Feng, was something that the writer experienced subjectively. It was the result of a writer identifying with his or her subject in order to carry out "self-struggle" and "self-expansion." He also stressed that in "writing the truth" one must place importance upon reflecting the dark side of life, including the wounds of the working people's spiritual slavery. Of course, Zhou Yang expounded upon his "concept of truthfulness" more than once, but he never abandoned his view that one should use socialist

realism to look dialectically upon the truth of life. He felt it was a good thing in the midst of actual development of the revolution to reflect the reality of life. He argued that we had to praise the praiseworthy and expose evil. The problem was that one had to have a correct stance and world view. "History Cannot Be Evaded" attempts to portray the "truth" theory as being in opposition to the "combination of two" slogan and Mao Zedong Thought on Literature and Art in order to buttress his conclusion that Mao Zedong Thought on Literature and Art caused literature and art to "lose their aesthetic nature." He argues in vain, for this is not in line with historical reality. His idea that "after 1949 literature and art were unwilling render complete loyalty to the current regime" is a concept which he had to wrack his brains to squeeze out, and it would have us believe that the entire Chinese literary community stood in opposition to socialism. People cannot help but ask, "Upon what do you base this assertion? Is this in line with the actual facts regarding the Chinese literary community in the period immediately after the founding of the nation?"

Criticism of human nature and humanism had surfaced much earlier in criticism soon after the founding of the nation against "Company Commander Guan." Later, differences of opinion between the Chinese and Soviet communist parties gradually deepened because Ba Ren [1572 0086], Li Helin [2621 0149 2651], and Wang Shuming [3769 3219 2494] one after another wrote to argue that literature should show human nature, while humanist thought rose as a force in Soviet literature after the 20th Soviet Party Congress, and Sholokhov's *One Person's Encounters* had widespread influence. For this reason, criticism of human nature and humanism was raised to the level of opposition to bourgeois revisionism. During the Third National Congress of Writers and Artists in 1960, Zhou Yang delivered a report entitled "The Road of China's Socialist Literature and Art," in which he made a concerted attack on human nature and humanism. This report had been approved by Mao Zedong. All articles about critical human nature and humanism have defended the theoretical positions taken by Mao Zedong in the *Talks at the Yanan Forum on Literature and Art* regarding human nature and human love. Those articles upheld the concept of class analysis and class struggle. In reality, they all stressed the class nature of human beings while denying the existence of common human emotions and human nature, and without doing any analysis at all they classified humanist thought as a bourgeois revisionist ideological trend. The direct consequence of this theoretical trend was that descriptions of characters in literary creations became simplified into a model in which there was "one typical character for each social class." From then on, no more mention was made of socialist humanism. Love between men and women and affection between father and son became "forbidden zones."

However, the 10 years prior to the Cultural Revolution still occupy a position in the literary history of New China which is important and that cannot be swept

under the rug. Many works which represent the outstanding success of China's socialist literature were produced during these 10 years. When it comes to novels, there was *Sea of Trees, Prairie of Snow* by Qu Bo [2575 3134], *Red Sun*, by Wu Qiang [0702 1730], *Song of Youth* by Yang Mo [2799 3106], *Big Change in a Mountain Village* by Zhou Libo [0719 4539 3134], *Bitter Cauliflower* by Feng Deying [7458 1795 5391], *The Great Wave* by Li Jieren [2621 0512 0086], *Shanghai Morning* by Zhou Erfu [0719 5079 1788], and *History of an Undertaking* by Liu Qing [2692 7230]. In the area of theater, there was *Cai Wenji* [5591 2429 1213] by Guo Moruo, *Guan Hanqing* [7070 3352 0615] by Tian Han [3944 3352], *Chapter on Bravery* by Cao Yu [2580 4417], *Sentry Under the Neon Light* by Shen Ximeng [3088 6007 5536], and *The Younger Generation* by Chen Yun [7315 5089]. In movies, there was *Red Women's Army* by Liang Xin [4731 0207], *Lin Zexu* [2651 0463 1776] by Ye Lin [0673 2651], *The Youth in Our Village* by Ma Feng [7456 3536], *A New Tale of Old Soldiers* by Li Zhun [2621 3294], *Little Soldier Zhang Ga* by Xu Guangyao [1776 0342 5069], *Heroic Sons and Daughters* by Ba Jin [1572 6855], and *Stage Sisters* by Xu Gu [1776 6253], and others. In opera, there was *Sparks in the Reed Marsh*, *Tale of a Red Lantern*, *Taking Weihai Mountain by Strategy*, and *Miss Li Hui*. In poetry, there was *Collection of Poems From Yumen* by Li Ji [2621 1323], *The Flames of Revenge* by Wen Jie [5113 2212], *March of the Generals* by Guo Moruo, and *Ode to Lei Feng* by He Jingzhi [6320 2417 0037]. In addition, there were famous works by such essayists as Liu Baiyu [0491 4101 5038], Qin Mu [4440 3668], and Yang Shuo [2799 2592]. All of the works mentioned above bristled with the fiery temperament of their time. In their broad-ranging explorations into subject matter, theme, form, and style, they described the life and struggle that writers had experienced so intensely over a long period of time. They portrayed the image of various characters who have emerged during China's long history and in our socialist world of today. They enabled Chinese literature (in the modern sense of the word) to embark upon the road of nationalization and popularization by availing itself of the foundation provided by classical and foreign literature. They also enabled further ideological and artistic maturation.

While it is true that these successes are undeniably due to the correct guidance provided writers by Mao Zedong Thought on Literature and Art on many fundamental issues, they were even more closely linked with the resistance by Zhou Enlai to leftist errors in this period. In 1959 and 1962 he twice corrected leftist tendencies in literature and art. The vigorous output of historical dramas and essays after 1959 and of plays after 1962 was the direct result of Zhou's correction of leftist tendencies. In order to commemorate the 20th anniversary of the *Talks at the Yanan Forum on Literature and Art*, Zhou Yang called together a group of famous literature and art theoreticians to look back upon and summarize the practice of revolutionary literature and art. They reiterated that "literature and art must serve the

broadest masses of the people, and they wrote a group of theoretical articles that opposed both rightist and leftist tendencies. He Qifang [0149 0366 5364] wrote "The 20 Years Since Our Victory in Combat," which appraised many issues related to literature and art theory in a relatively dialectical manner and was representative of the works of that time. We should also note that Marxist study of literature and art developed by leaps and bounds during these 10 years. Beginning with the transplanting of "literary principles," by the Soviet scholar Zhimoviev [?1323 5459 5481 0048 1133], works using Marxist concepts to study literature and art were published by Chinese scholars such as Ba Ren, Huo Songlin [7202 2646 2651], Ran Yuda [0373 2948 6671], Li Shuqian [2621 2885 6197], and Yi Qun [0110 5028]. They expounded upon the characteristics and laws of various aspects of literature and art as an aesthetic ideology in a relatively comprehensive manner, explaining deep concepts in simple terms. This also had a positive effect on the effort to guide the broad masses of writers and literature enthusiasts in their literary creation. This cannot be ignored. Although none of these works failed to emphasize that literature and art must serve politics, they all provided quite detailed expositions on the aesthetic characteristics of literature and art, including the relationship between art's image-based nature, its typicalness, truthfulness, aesthetic function, content, form, and style. This helped readers gain a comprehensive understanding of the aesthetic laws of literature and art. The Institute of Literary Research of the Chinese Academy of Sciences, compiled and published *Collected Translations of Classical Theory on Literature and Art* and *Collected Translations of Contemporary Theory on Literature and Art*. By translating and introducing both ancient and contemporary authors from around the world, these publications achieved the positive influence of expanding readers' horizons and enabling them to base their judgments on a wider array of sources.

#### IV. 10 Years of Cultural Revolution: A Period of Literary Wilt in the New China

During these 10 years, there were fully five in which practically no literary works were published in China. All literary journals were shut down, and many writers were criticized and denounced, insulted, injured, and sent down to factories and rural villages. It was not until 1971, with the intervention of Mao Zedong and Zhou Enlai, that a small number of publications on literature and art were reopened, including RENMIN WENXUE [PEOPLE'S LITERATURE] and SHIKAN [JOURNAL OF POETRY]. Publishing houses did not resume publication of books on literature until this time, either. For a long time, the only programs to be seen on the stage or movie screens were "model operas." In this situation, literature and art had "100 flowers wilting and a single flower in bloom." This was unprecedented in a large country like China with a population of 1 billion. It is naturally Mao Zedong who must take the most blame for this situation.

As a Marxist theorist, Mao Zedong's limitation was the fact that he was quite lacking of any sensory understanding of modern capitalism. During his long stay in rural revolutionary bases and after his rise to the position of national leader, to a certain extent the conditions of his daily life differed from those of the masses. This limited his ideological field of vision. Even though he read a lot of popular books, he was partial to classical Chinese literature. He also had a lot of revolutionary vision, daring, and charisma. He attempted to explore a unique model for socialist development with Chinese characteristics. He hoped to quickly overcome China's backward state, and he also sought to prevent China from ever changing its political color. Although he had an intellectual background, he harbored a peasant's distrust of intellectuals. He was extremely sensitive about power, and he generally took an excessively harsh attitude toward the form of class struggle. This was especially true in the 1960's when China was isolated in international society. This probably came about because of his theory about continuing revolution under the dictatorship of the proletariat. These were probably the ideological and personal characteristics of Mao Zedong which spurred him to launch the earthshaking Cultural Revolution.

In the worldwide communist movement, "leftism" is an international contagion. Although Lenin had opposed puerile "leftism," he treated intellectuals quite severely at the beginning of the October Revolution. The disastrous consequences of Stalin's "leftist" errors for the communist movement in the Soviet Union and throughout the world are known to all. Many other overall "leftist" errors have been committed in the history of the Communist Party of China (CPC). Some feel that "leftism is a problem of understanding; rightism is a problem of political stance." This feeling that the left is better than the right is quite firmly entrenched in the CPC. Once a "leftist" error begins to spread, few people ever dare oppose it. From today's perspective, the Cultural Revolution seems quite absurd, but when Mao Zedong launched it, almost no one dared voice any dissenting views. On the contrary, because of Mao Zedong's monumental prestige, even those who were criticized and denounced had to mouth their insincere support for him. This was truly a gigantic historical tragedy. In the realm of literature and art, it was the extremely leftist literary and artistic thinking spawned by the *Summary of the Meeting on Work in the Military in Literature and Art* which occupied the position of leadership. Mao Zedong personally revised and approved this *Summary*. It materially represented a new development of the Mao Zedong Thought on literature and art of that time.

The *Summary* was produced on the eve of the Cultural Revolution. It stated that "there has been a sharp class struggle going on for the past 16 years on the cultural front, that since the founding of the nation "an antiparty, antisocialist black line" within literary and artistic circles "that opposes Chairman Mao has taken over the



dictatorship which was ours. This black line is the combination of the bourgeois ideology of literature and art, the modern revisionist ideology of literature and art, and what is called 1930's literature and art." The *Summary* called the "broad path of realism" theory the "deepening of realism" theory, the theory of "the intermediate figure," the "opposing decisions based on content" theory, the theory of "converging spirits of the times," the "on opposing being explosive" theory, the "on reality" theory, the "rebel" theory, and other so-called "representative theories" of the "black line of literature and art." The *Summary* announced its intention to "thoroughly root out" this "black line of literature and art." At the same time that it rejected the "blank" theory and the tradition of revolutionary literature and art, it proposed the "new era" theory and advocated the creation of a "new literature and art." The *Summary* aimed its arrows directly at Zhou Yang and the others who had gotten their start in the leftist literature and art movement of the 1930's, and who had long held positions of leadership over literature and art. This is something that Zhou Yang could not have foreseen, because Zhou Yang had always posed in literary and artistic circles as the spokesman, interpreter, and upholder of Mao Zedong Thought on literature and art, and he had, in fact, once enjoyed Mao Zedong's complete trust. This 180-degree turnabout cannot be completely explained in terms of being in or out of Mao Zedong's good graces, or in terms of the kind of rumor by people like Jiang Qing. Later, in the May 16th Directive, the leaders in cultural departments were called "power holders taking the capitalist road," "bourgeois reactionary academic authorities," and even "the Khrushchev sleeping next to us." Perhaps this is the logical development of Mao Zedong's old view of most intellectuals as "bourgeois intellectuals." However, that a person like Mao Zedong, who had once opposed "leftism," should confuse black and white and look upon large numbers of his own people as the enemy is truly amazing! The "three highlights" principle and the "fundamental task" principle (which stressed the description of heroic figures), which were summarized from the "model operas" by Jiang Qing and her ilk, were further interpreted during the 10 years of the Cultural Revolution as necessary for "the combination of revolutionary realism and revolutionary romanticism." The principle that "literature and art serve politics" was further developed to the point where it served the political conspiracies of the gang of four. Although this did not come directly from Mao Zedong, it truly was the inevitable development of the pronounced leftist yawn of Mao Zedong Thought on literature and art during this period.

In retrospect, however, we must do a concrete analysis of the phenomenon of Chinese literature during the 10 years of the Cultural Revolution. One cannot simply condemn it in toto, declare it "a wasteland," or denounce all of it as the gang of four's "gang literature and art." First, the situation regarding what is known as the "model operas" is complex. *Shajiabang* was adapted from *Sparks From the Reed Marsh. Tale of a Lantern*,

*Taking Weihou Mountain by Strategy*, and *Attacking White Tiger Regiment* had already been written and performed before the Cultural Revolution. Such dance dramas as *White-Haired Girl*, and *Red Women's Army* had some history behind them, too. It was not only Jiang Qing who gave her opinion on the reworking and revision of these works; Mao Zedong and Zhou Enlai also voiced their opinions. Although these works, which demonstrate revolutionary and historical subject matter, carry the mark of "the three highlights," in a fundamental sense they still truthfully reflected real life and struggles, created some flesh-and-bones heroes who projected glorious images, and possessed intriguing artistic merit. They were clearly different from such works as *Harbor*, which were created under the direct leadership of the gang of four. Second, among the works that were created in the early 1970's when literature was gradually beginning to recover, some works, such as *Counterattack* and *The Big Holiday* were in the category of "subversive literature and art." Some, such as *On the Deck of the Warship* belonged to "gang literature and art" and confused black and white by spreading the propaganda which argued that "old cadres are a democratic faction and a capitalist faction" and that "the rebel faction is the faction of proletarian revolution." There were still others that described subject matter taken from revolutionary history. They were not influenced by extreme leftist thought. Such works included *All Is Red Across 1,000 Mountain Peaks*, *Twinkling Red Stars*, and *Spring Tide Rush*. The large number of poems that were produced during this period can be analyzed in a like manner.

Of course, in comparison, the small number of literary works produced during those 10 years that have stood the test of time is ample proof of the "leftist" character of Mao Zedong Thought on literature and art in his later years, as well as the disastrous consequences to literature in New China of the Cultural Revolution that he launched. It would strike even closer to the truth to state that these disastrous consequences were perhaps heightened by the actions of Lin Biao and the gang of four, and were not all what Mao Zedong originally intended. Nevertheless, the lessons we have had to learn have been bitter indeed. For this reason, since the death of Mao Zedong and the end of the Cultural Revolution, in the course of historical comparison large numbers of people have become aware of the need to reconsider the merits and shortcomings of Mao Zedong and his theories.

"History Cannot Be Evaded" argues that it is in line with the facts to state that people "insisted on the practical political function of literature and art" during the Cultural Revolution, but on this basis the author goes on to declare that "as the practical political function expanded, the aesthetic function of art contracted correspondingly, and even shrank to nothing." Not only does this view of politics and aesthetics as mutually exclusive not square with the facts, it is theoretically untenable, because there have been too many works throughout history that have had clear political leanings and rich aesthetic appeal. Engels said that "Aeschylus, the father

of tragedy, and Aristophanes, the father of comedy, were both poets with strong passionate views, and Dante and Cervantes were no less so. The main value of Schiller's *Ploy and Love* resided in the fact that it was Germany's first play with a political stance. The contemporary Russians and Norwegians who have written so many outstanding novels all have strong political views." Turning to works which appeared during the Cultural Revolution, the reason why *Tale of the Red Lantern* and *Taking Weihai Mountain by Strategy* were so moving, and why *Harbor* and *Ode to Longjiang* were so insipid, had nothing to do with the strength or weakness of their political function. The key was that the content and form of the first two works were more skillfully combined and had a higher level of artistic truth, while the latter two were phony and crude. It is indeed very powerful to criticize the "political instrument" theory on the basis of the destruction visited upon literature and art during the Cultural Revolution, but to use this to prove that Mao Zedong Thought on literature and art has always caused literature and art to lose their aesthetic nature is not necessarily convincing.

#### V. The Last 13 Years: A Period of Diversity in the Literature of New China

In 1976, Mao Zedong died and the gang of four was smashed, but Mao Zedong's enormous ideological influence continued. As with all great historical figures, his physical death did not signify the disappearance of his ideological influence. Thus, China's people first entered a two-year period of ideological inertia in which the ideology of the "whatever faction" was the standard. The situation was the same in the arena of literature and art. Even though people had already begun to reconsider Mao Zedong Thought on literature and art, every step forward was fraught with difficulty. Rapid progress in this regard did not come until discussion was launched about the idea that "practice is the criterion by which truth is judged," especially when the Third Plenary Session of the 11th Central Committee called on people to restore order from chaos and liberate their thinking.

The process of bringing order out of chaos in the arena of theory on literature and art began when they overthrew the theory of a "black line in literature and art" and continued with rehabilitation of those who had been known as proponents of the "eight black theories." In his report to the Fourth National Conference on Culture, Zhou Yang substituted the phrases "serve the people, serve socialism" for such phrases as "literature and art are subordinate to politics" and "literature and art must serve politics." He did this in accordance with a decision taken by the party Central Committee. This report summed up 30 years of experience and lessons learned in New China's literature and art. It expounded in a relatively comprehensive way upon the correct relationship between literature and art and the people, literature and art and reality, and literature and art and tradition in a relatively comprehensive way. It pointed out the path by which to enrich literature and art in the new period. The idea that "truth is the life of literature and art" was again

affirmed. While the creative principle of "socialist realism" or "the combination of two" had never been abandoned, the voices calling for the resumption and promotion of the tradition of revolutionary realism grew stronger and stronger. The spearhead of the effort to bring order out of chaos was pointed primarily at "leftist" errors, "leftist" dogmatism, and the distortion wrought by vulgar sociology upon Mao Zedong Thought on literature and art. Apart from readjusting their concepts regarding the relationship literature and art and politics, people basically upheld such programs as the *Talks at the Yanan Forum on Literature and Art*, "let a hundred flowers bloom and a hundred schools of thought contend," and "let foreign things serve China's purposes, let ancient things serve modern purposes," and "push out the old and bring in the new." Afterward, the community of literary and artistic criticism gradually began to discuss such issues as thinking in terms of images, typical creation, the fundamental characteristics of literature and art, and human nature and humanism. The idea that "literature is the study of man" once again was affirmed, and the laws of literature and art gained wider and wider respect. The issue of praising the praiseworthy and exposing the dark side of life was expounded upon and dealt with in theory and practice in a relatively correct way. In discussions of human nature and humanism, the issue of a universal human nature (including people's natural nature and social nature, their ethnic nature, and their class, stratum, and group nature) was affirmed. The links and distinctions between Marxist humanism and traditional bourgeois humanism were also explored in relative depth. In literary and artistic creative activity, the description of human nature and human sentiment, as well as advocacy of the spirit of humanism, quickly became the salient characteristic of literature in the new period.

Diversification in literature prior to 1984 was manifested primarily in increasingly varied subject matter, themes, forms, and styles. "Forbidden zones" of creativity were continually opened up. "Literature of the wounded," "reflective literature," and "reform literature" succeeded each other. In the area of methods of artistic creation, however, realism continued to represent the mainstream despite the challenge to traditional realism which was posed by the appearance in 1980 of Western modernist thought on literature and art.

After 1985, a new development occurred in the diversification of literature and art. Literary concepts, creative methods, and the orientation of aesthetic values all became diversified. This burst of activity on the literary scene gave people the feeling that they were being "dazzled by color and deafened by sound." While this does indicate a further flourishing of literature following the revival of literature in the new period, it also showed that trends in literary theory and the actual creations of writers were in a state of flux. There was a certain amount of breakthrough, exploration, and opening up in all quarters. Research into literature and art has seen new breakthroughs and accomplishments in such areas



as literary and artistic linguistics, literary and artistic psychology, and literary and artistic sociology. These developments came about as a result of the translation and introduction of Western literary criticism and the last few decades of new successes in Soviet literary criticism. Furthermore, they are due to the broad drawing upon the cognition theory, information theory, control theory, systems theory, linguistics, psychology, cultural studies, anthropology, and philosophy. Last, they are also due to things outside the historical Marxist methods of aesthetic criticism, that is, they are due to the introduction of new methods of literary and artistic criticism from the West, including comparative literature, structuralism, theory on symbols, and systemic analysis. Not only did this bring about a deeper reconsideration of Mao Zedong Thought on literature and art, many new-wave theoreticians of literature and art have been struggling to escape the bounds of tradition and establish new systems of their own. Study of main-body theory and ontology has, in fact, been one of the main successes of the new wave theory on literature and art, even though these theoretical explorations are all somewhat incomplete. Even as we fully affirm the positive nature of the breakthrough contributions of new-wave theory, and praise the fact that the diversification of theory has spurred the diversification of literary creation and brought the initial formation of a very positive situation in which "a hundred flowers bloom and a hundred schools of thought contend," we must also acknowledge that the concepts and tenets of Mao Zedong Thought on literature and art regarding a series of fundamental issues have not become obsolete, and they still guide the creations of many writers. We must also recognize that many new-wave theories are nothing more than reproductions of modern Western works of literary criticism, and have not actually been closely tied in with the practice of Chinese revolutionary literature and art. In some aspects, the rejection of and attack upon Mao Zedong Thought on literature and art by new-wave theory is actually the product of a certain rebellious frame of mind that happens to be fashionable, which in and of itself is not sufficient to prove the veracity of these viewpoints.

People have all emphasized the aesthetic nature of literature and art, and they have attached great importance to the pursuit of artistic beauty. This is reasonable. However, at the same time, some people have advocated "distancing literature and art from politics," "transcending politics," and "art for art's sake." They completely despise and reject such slogans as "serve politics" and "serve the people, serve society," and have raised a call to "play with literature," claiming that literature "has always belonged to the nobility." The absurdity of this type of theory is obvious. It was criticized in literary circles in China even back in the 1920's and 1930's. In fact, it is difficult to call it a "new wave." At most it is old wine in new bottles, and a replay of a familiar old tune.

It is only right to give a factual analysis and evaluation of the various literary criticisms of the new period. However, there is simply no way to view the article "History Cannot Be Evaded" as normal or scientific, with its derogatory and vituperative comments on any literary criticism that preceded the new literary criticism (include Mao Zedong Thought on literature and art), especially given the way it used this method to build up the prestige of new-wave literature. It claimed that "during the 29-year period spanning the early and latter 'lost period,' the question of the fundamental nature of literature and art went practically unmentioned, much less was it explored systematically." People cannot help but ask how it could be that, during the first 17 years following the founding of New China, explorations within literary circles on such issues as artistic beauty, truthfulness, thinking in terms of images, typical creation, the superstructure of literature and art, and aesthetic ideologies had nothing to do with the nature of literature and art. The article also declared that "the core of Mao Zedong Thought on literature and art was its insistence on the practical political function of literature and art, which determined that its method of research would inevitably degenerate from a "theory of recognizing the simple and the unadorned into a vulgar sociology." We have already pointed out that it is very one-sided to sum up the core of Mao Zedong Thought on literature and art as nothing more than a "practical political function." It was truly a surprise when the author uncorked his fabulous theory about how the research method of Mao Zedong Thought on literature and art was a theory of recognizing the simple and the unadorned" and "vulgar sociology," because everyone knows that Mao Zedong's theory of cognition and theory of methodology both were outstanding demonstrations of the dialectical materialism and historical materialism of Marxism. He himself expressed more than once his opposition to insipid, unimaginative recording of life. He felt that literature and art should be higher, more intense, more typical, more ideal, and more concentrated than real life, and, for these characteristics, more universal. It was truly a great invention of the author of "History Cannot Be Evaded" to equate Mao Zedong Thought on literature and art with vulgar sociology, and use this to belittle and negate Mao Zedong Thought on literature and art.

Literary creative activity in the new period has achieved great successes, and it have also exhibited serious problems. To put it in unemotional terms, the successes cannot be separated from ideological liberation, artistic democracy, and the guidance provided by the universal truths to be found in Mao Zedong Thought on literature and art. Several works serve as representative samples of the successes of literature in the new period. In poetry: Ai Qing's *Song of Return*, He Jingzhi's *China's October*, [illegible]'s *The Grass Is Singing*, and *Fatherland, My Dear Fatherland*, by Shu Ting [5289 1250]. Novels: *The Huang He Is Flowing Away to the East*, by Li Zhun [2621 3294], *Xu Mao and His Daughters*, by Zhou Keqin [0719 0344 5367], *A Winter's Spring*, by Li Guowen [2621

0948 2429], *Heavy Wings*, by Zhang Jie [1728 3381], *Reaching Middle Age*, by Chen Rong [6186 1369], and *Factory Manager Qiao Takes Office*, by Jiang Zilong [5592 1311 7893]. Plays: *In Praise of Loyalty* by Su Shuyang [5685 0647 7122], *Mayor Chen Yi* by Sha Yexin [3097 0673 2450], and *Deep in the Tian Mountains* by Li Binkui [2621 2430 1145] and Tang Dong [0781 2767]. All of these works are the crystallization of their authors' long experience in life. They are also the sublimation of their authors' union with the people, and their deep identification with the people's longings and desires. For this reason, they earned enthusiastic receptions from the people, and played the positive role of bracing the people's spirits and inspiring them to transform their environment.

Although the diversification of theory which took place after 1985 spurred the diversification of creation, the rampant popularity of the ideology of bourgeois liberalization enticed many writers down evil paths. There was a glut of "sex literature" and "violence literature" on the book market. The pernicious effect upon readers needs no elaboration. What is more, new-wave literature, which prides itself as the "vanguard faction" and the "explorers faction," seems on the surface to present a dazzling array of activities and an extraordinary amount of excitement, but the number of works with true value has grown smaller and smaller. Many works have even promoted bourgeois ethics, values, and views of life. They have described decadent bourgeois lifestyles and trivial sentiments, and have whipped up the flames of the ideology of bourgeois liberalization. Furthermore, because writers no longer delve deeply into life and have taken to simple "self-expression," they have finally fallen to the level of ruminating on their own private joys and sorrows, and fabricating wild stories. Some have also advocated the description of the subconscious, hallucinations, the so-called "precivilized state," and man's animal nature, all of which have caused works to be abstruse and difficult to understand, or to even completely lose their aesthetic function of unifying the true, the good, and the beautiful. Many types of new-wave literature have enjoyed only the most fleeting popularity before disappearing. How could this not be related to the wholesale copy of undigested new-wave theories from the West, and the rejection of Mao Zedong Thought on literature and art?

#### VI. One Must Take a Scientific Attitude When Reviewing and Evaluating History

History is not a little girl that one can dress up however one pleases. History is history. It cannot be tampered with or distorted. When one earnestly reviews and seriously evaluates history, a serious, scientific attitude is especially necessary. One must not only have a detailed mastery of historical materials, but must also maintain a historicist approach in carrying out factual analyses of historical figures and phenomena. One must explore the laws of history in depth. The past is reviewed in order to improve the future. The reason why history is worth remembering is that people can gain wisdom from the

lessons history teaches, thereby changing their actions and avoiding the mistakes of their predecessors. A scientific attitude is even more necessary when one carries out a thorough study of the positive and negative influences upon 40 years of literature in New China that have been exerted by a historical figure like Mao Zedong, who has achieved great successes and committed grave errors.

The key reason why "History Cannot Be Evaded" is unconvincing is that the author did not actually respect history. He did not use dependable historical materials to carry out a factual analysis. Sometimes he knew only that "such and such has been said." Sometimes he based his statements on conjecture. Sometimes he engaged in blatant distortion of historical facts and documents. Sometimes he simply cranked out fabrications that fly in the face of reality. Mao Zedong's *Talks at the Yanan Forum on literature and art* clearly expounded upon the aesthetic nature of literature and art, yet the author was able to assert that Mao Zedong Thought on literature and art "had lost its aesthetic nature." Mao Zedong clearly expounded upon the relationships between literature and art and such things as the people, reality, and history, yet the author asserted that the core of Mao Zedong Thought on literature and art was nothing more than an insistence on "the practical political function of literature and art." Hu Feng's reservations and negative opinions regarding Mao Zedong Thought on literature and art had nothing to do with the issue of the aesthetic nature of literature and art, yet the author held for a certainty that the essence of Hu Feng's disagreement was simply that Hu Feng "wanted to allow literature and art to retain their aesthetic nature even as they remained subordinated to politics." There is a clear distinction between the "leftist" errors demonstrated by Mao Zedong Thought on literature and art during its latter period and the many correct ideological points which it provided during its earlier period, yet the author rendered a sweeping judgment of the whole period as "lost." Zhou Yang clearly introduced to readers the writings of Belinsky, Chernyshevsky, and others before liberation. We can trace his introduction of such writings to as early as 1937, yet the author insisted that "Zhou Yang took advantage of the opportunity presented by the double hundred program to introduce the realist legacy of Belinsky, Chernyshevsky, and Dubrolyubov (which was very much favored by Marx and Lenin), thereby proceeding in a roundabout manner to correct the wartime program." As a Marxist theoretician on literature and art, Zhou Yang never stopped expounding upon and propagating Mao Zedong Thought on literature and art with all his energy, despite the fact that he was not free of "leftist" error, either. Many of his works contributed to the enrichment and development of Marxist theory on literature and art, yet the author of "History Cannot Be Evaded" asserted that Zhou Yang only used the "write the truth" theory to revise Mao Zedong Thought on literature and art. He even asserted that "Zhou Yang bears some responsibility for the backward state of Mao Zedong Thought on literature and art." It is clear, however, that many works which explore the nature of

literature and art have appeared upon the literary scene since liberation, including *On the Laws of Artistic Creation*, published by Zhou Yang in 1955. Nevertheless, the author gleefully pronounced that "the issue of the nature of literature and art had hardly been mentioned on the Chinese literary scene, much less been explored systematically." What can you do about a writer like this who does not need to check the facts? Of course, during the course of literary development in New China, there have indeed been formalist, generalized works bereft of any aesthetic character. This was a kind of tendency, and it was even quite severe for a long time. However, this did not come about because Mao Zedong Thought on literature and art was "lost," but was due to people's pedestrian understanding and one-sided practice of Mao Zedong Thought on literature and art. Since the beginning of the new period, China's literature has attached great importance to the recovery of the aesthetic character of literature and art. This means that the earlier mistaken tendencies in practice and theory have been overcome, but it does not imply a negation of Mao Zedong Thought on literature and art. The fundamental error of "History Cannot Be Evaded" lies in the fact that it spoke of these two things as if they were one, blamed all the sins on Mao Zedong Thought on literature and art, and used this as the assumption upon which the thesis of the entire article was based.

No different than the rest of Mao Zedong Thought, Mao Zedong Thought on literature and art is a valuable part of the ideological and cultural legacy of the Chinese people. Today, in accordance with the principle that practice is the sole criterion of truth, we are subjecting it to concrete analysis and culling out the "leftist" errors. Giving it universality and truthfulness, and enabling it to recover its rightful glory is precisely what we should be doing as we look back upon the 40-year course of literature in New China. To distort, denigrate, and negate Mao Zedong Thought on literature and art in order to elevate the so-called new-wave literature is not only unlikely to win acceptance from the readers, but it also violates the basic standards of personal character which any scholar should demonstrate.

It should be pointed out that the mistaken tendencies of "History Cannot Be Evaded" were not mere happenstance. They reflect the deleterious atmosphere which has spread throughout the literary community in recent years—one in which "people do not worry about being factual, and they resort to demagoguery." What is more, it clearly reflects the ideology of bourgeois liberalization—negation of the revolutionary tradition, the successes of revolutionary literature and art, Marxism, and Mao Zedong Thought. However, the sublimation of truth can hardly be wiped away, and true reflections of objective truth cannot be lightly brushed aside. From the tortuous path traveled by literature in the 40 years since the founding of New China, and from its glorious successes, one can see more clearly the mistakes and limitations of Mao Zedong. One can also understand more deeply the undeniable contributions that Mao Zedong

and his thought on literature and art have made toward the enrichment and development of China's socialist literature. There has been a common thread running through new-wave theoreticians in recent years. They want to negate Mao Zedong Thought on Literature and Art in its entirety in order to negate all the literature of New China which came before the rise of new-wave literature, and to make up a new "empty and blank" theory and a new "new era" theory, as if the only real literature in China began to appear in the mid-1980's. Now is the time for people to pay earnest attention to this tendency.

### **Institute of Literature Investigates Journal**

900N0482A Beijing WENXUE PINGLUN [LITERARY REVIEW] in Chinese No 6, 15 Nov 89 p 32

[Article by Wen Yan (5113 1484) dated 16 September 1989: "The Institute of Literature Holds Forum To Investigate and Rectify WENXUE PINGLUN"]

[Text] In accordance with the decision of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences on investigating and rectifying WENXUE PINGLUN, the Institute of Literature recently invited personages of all fields in the institute to attend several consecutive forums.

Comrades participating in the forum conducted profound analysis and sharp criticism of several articles that have serious political problems in WENXUE PINGLUN's fourth issue of 1989. They think that the article "History Cannot Be Evaded" asserted that "adhering to the practical political function of literature and art is the essence of Mao Zedong Thought in literature and art" and that this essence is the same as "the theory of tools" which is also unscientific and unaesthetic. It also described the "principle of model play" and "conspiratorial literature and art" as the "development" and "end" of Mao Zedong Thought in literature and art. This explains that the basic tendency of the author is to completely negate Mao Zedong Thought in literature and art. The writing style of this article is very bad. It is frivolous, glib, sarcastic. It even makes personal attacks. Some comrades also mentioned the erroneous ideas in several other articles in the fourth issue. For instance, without any concrete analysis, "The Style of Writing and Personality" generalized intellectuals in New China as "those who are most kindhearted, have the most unfortunate fate, and are in the most pitiful predicament." It wrote: "Whenever there is a political movement and a sign of disturbance, intellectuals are always the first to come under attack, and a group of elites in the intellectual circle are always subject to misfortune of one kind or another." For another instance, without good grounds, the article "The Cultural Characteristics of Patriotism" asserted that "ancient China did not have the social and cultural soil for the birth of nationalism and patriotism," which grow only in the plight of backwardness and attacks; and, even if there were patriotism, it did not possess "the broad

mind and modern quality and style of cultural cosmopolitanism," thus negating as well the longstanding and deep-rooted patriotic tradition of the Chinese nation. The participants at the forum emphatically pointed out that the appearance of articles with political errors in the magazine after the counterrevolutionary riot was quelled in the capital has a bad social influence and is especially serious in nature.

Comrades participating at the forum pointed out that, in the past few years, WENXUE PINGLUN has had some problems in the direction of management and some articles it carried have violated the four basic principles and advocated the ideas of bourgeois liberalization. Although the issues and approaches of these articles are different, they have one thing in common. That is, they all underestimate and are indifferent toward or even wantonly criticize and negate Marxism-Leninism and Mao Zedong Thought, the basic tenets of dialectical and historical materialism, China's fine culture and tradition, the revolutionary literature and art movement, and the achievements of socialist literature and art. But when it comes to Western bourgeois ideas, they insist on taking in everything and regard them as banners and magic weapons. Using bourgeois concepts as the measurement of value, these articles have confused right with wrong and the beautiful with the ugly and fallen into the mud pit of national nihilism. WENXUE PINGLUN has enthusiastically provided space for or praised those who stubbornly stick to the ideas of bourgeois liberalization such as Liu Binyan [0491 6333 7159], Fang Lizhi [2455 0536 0037], and Liu Xiaobo [0491 2556 3134]. WENXUE PINGLUN has deviated from the correct orientation of management.

Comrades participating at the forum criticized WENXUE PINGLUN for failing to implement the "double hundred" principle and for lacking academic democracy and tolerance for contention. They pointed out that this magazine tends to "defend those who belong to its own faction and attack those who don't" in the selection of manuscripts and the layout of the magazine. It would print page after page of articles that agree with its opinions, despite the fact that they are of mediocre quality and great quantity. As for those articles that do not agree with its opinions, no matter how rational their theses are they would be ignored and never be seen in print. This is bound to cause the circle of writers and readers to get smaller and narrower. Instead of being a magazine sponsored by the Institute of Literature, it looks more like an "internal magazine." This is against the purpose of an academic journal of China's social science research organization.

Comrades participating at the forum also affirmed the helpful work of WENXUE PINGLUN in the past few years. Through investigation and rectification, they hoped to correct the orientation of management, resist and criticize the ideas of bourgeois liberalization, strengthen the nature of science and academics, unite

literary research workers throughout China to make due contribution to promoting literary research, and boost literary undertakings.

The forum was presided over respectively by Comrade Ma Liangchun [7456 5328 2504] and Cao Tiancheng [2580 1131 2052], deputy directors of the Institute of Literature.

## Column Features Criticism of WENXUE PINGLUN

### 'Inadequacies' Exposed

90ON0482B Beijing WENXUE PINGLUN [LITERARY REVIEW] in Chinese No 6, 15 Nov 89 pp 5-7

[Article by Wang Shanzhong (3769 0810 1813) in the column "Sketches and Notes on the Investigation and Rectification of WENXUE PINGLUN": "My Opinions on the Inadequacies of WENXUE PINGLUN"]

[Text] **Editor's note:** *We have compiled and published a group of sketches and notes in this issue. They will help us conduct in-depth self-examination by either criticizing the mistakes of some articles our journal has published or pointing out the problems our journal has in the orientation of management. We would like to tell you again that we sincerely welcome the literary research circle and readers who are concerned with our journal to continue to make criticism and suggestions to help us do a good job in the investigation and rectification work of our journal and help it adopt a new look.*

In the past few years, WENXUE PINGLUN has tried many new attempts and reforms in terms of layout, column, and content. These pioneering measures have captured the interest and consideration of literary research workers. This is of definite, positive significance to the enlivening, flourishing, and deepening of research in literary theory. Needless to say, WENXUE PINGLUN has also had weaknesses, errors, and serious mistakes. Based on my observations, I would like to point out a few inadequacies and hope to be of help to the rectification and improvement of the journal. They are my humble opinions and please bear with me.

1. The orientation of the journal. Due to the unusual, objective status of WENXUE PINGLUN, it not only is a journal of the Institute of Literature, but has become almost a journal of all literary researchers in China. It has wide influence at home and abroad. Its editorial principle and content both can attract attention and arouse repercussions in society. WENXUE PINGLUN regards "a pioneering, contemporary, and academic nature" as "the aim of the journal." But, in my opinion, due to the lack of "scientific nature," it does not have the criterion for measuring "the pioneering, contemporary, and academic nature" because "pioneering" and "academic" nature may be interpreted in different ways. For instance, some articles in the journal have been misleading on such issues as how to introduce "new" disciplines and apply "new" methods and on the issue of



research of the subject theory. In their articles, some writers indiscriminately use the terminology of natural sciences, willfully stretch the meaning of "subject," discuss the so-called value of subject and the equality of personality in abstract terms, rashly negate the Marxist theory of reflection, and apply some vague philosophical concepts, and so on. This superficially clever, exaggerating, and flattering style of writing and study is really harmful to the people. Mao Zedong held that "scientific attitude is 'seeking truth from facts' and that the arrogant attitude of 'regarding oneself as infallible' and as 'other people's teacher' can never solve any problem." As for the article "History Cannot Be Evaded" published in the fourth issue of 1989, it is no longer an issue of orientation in general academic discussion. This article lacks the spirit of seeking truth from facts as well as violates the basic stands of historical materialism. Instead of examining from a historical point of view the objective content of the historical process of the appearance of literary and art phenomena in a specific time frame and environment, the author waved the banner of examining "the essence of literature" from the so-called "academic angle" to reach his political purpose of opposing Mao Zedong Thought in literature and art from an idealistic point of view. It is impossible to correctly understand the role of Mao Zedong Thought in literature and art if we fail to take into consideration the political and social background of that time. This nihilistic attitude toward the historical and cultural heritage of mankind is completely wrong.

2. The tendency of factionalism. Due to the personal preference of persons in charge of the journal, WENXUE PINGLUN has the tendency of being an internal publication. This can be approached from two directions: As far as writers are concerned, all those who are close to the "guiding principle" of the journal are favored even if their articles are of lesser quality. Otherwise, even if their articles have desirable qualities, they still will be rejected for one reason or another due to the difference in their views. As far as the content of articles is concerned, articles concerning certain disciplines or fields favored by persons in charge of the journal are likely to be published; otherwise, they are unlikely to be published. I think that the academic viewpoint and ideological tendency of the editorial staff of WENXUE PINGLUN should not be equated with or used to replace the editorial principle of the journal. Because WENXUE PINGLUN is a publication of the Institute of Literature and the national literary circle, it is not a publication of a certain faction or individual, nor can it be a publication of a single school or of an internal nature. Editorial staff may write articles to state their own views, but they should not use their own views as a criterion for selecting contributions.

3. Implementing the "double hundred" principle. This can be approached from three directions: First, the contention of academic issues. No discipline or theory can be enriched, perfected, and developed without various forms of exploration. The contention of different

views is particularly helpful to the penetration of issues. I feel that the performance of WENXUE PINGLUN is unsatisfactory in this regard. For instance, there are different views both inside and outside the institute on the issue of subject in literature. It is completely possible to carry out in-depth discussions on such a theoretical issue. But, unfortunately, there has been basically only one voice of approval in the journal. Articles of different views have been returned under various excuses. The result of such a practice and the impression it created is that WENXUE PINGLUN is a publication of one school. Second, the reflection of the research results of various disciplines. As a publication of the Institute of Literature, WENXUE PINGLUN ought to reflect the research achievements of all disciplines and specialized subjects that are outstanding, that use various research methods, or that have certain academic value. It should not emphasize only articles applying "contemporary" "new disciplines" and "new methods" and ignore articles applying other beneficial scientific research methods. Third, serving numerous old, middle-aged, and young literary research workers. Academic prosperity and theoretical improvement require scholars and experts of different intellectual fields, theoretical trainings, and age groups to get involved and supplement each other. Missing the positive factors of any level would be a shame. As a publication of a unit with a fairly large number of literary research workers in China, WENXUE PINGLUN should set an example for bringing "a hundred schools of thought" into full play.

4. Upholding Marxism. Although the sound of cannons of the October Revolution sent us Marxism-Leninism, Marxism was not really understood, recognized, and accepted by the broad masses of people until after New China was founded. However, the study of Marxism was not without difficulty during this 40 years. Due to the interference of ultraleft trend of thought and the influence of dogmatism, the study and understanding of Marxism sometimes tended to be seriously oversimplified and one-sided. Especially during the period of Cultural Revolution, some people promoted the evil practice of "getting instant results" through extreme pragmatism. These erroneous practices caused some people who did not know the facts (especially some youth) to think erroneously that all of Marxism was no more than this. This is indeed a great misunderstanding. Of course, the fault lies not with Marxism itself, but with those people who are content with superficial understanding or who have ulterior motives.

In some Western capitalist countries, some scholars consider Marxism as a school of thought in research. But to us, it is not only a school of thought, but, more important, is a basic ideology for building our party and ruling our country, as Mao Zedong said, "The theoretical basis that guides our thought is Marxism-Leninism." Therefore, I think it is improper for our publication to treat Marxism merely as a school and a trend of thought. The guiding ideology of our publication and the ultimate criterion for judging contributions should also be

Marxism. Writers should be responsible for the articles they write, but editors are responsible for preventing those that violate the four basic principles from being published. Therefore, editors' responsibility is heavy. They should have not only broad education and professional knowledge, but also firm and clear-cut Marxist viewpoints and stand. If they make mistakes in their work, it will mislead readers and cause irreversible results.

As for those theories and schools and trends of thought that were once popular in the West, we should use Marxist viewpoints to analyze and criticize them and then absorb their rational part. We should not introduce them in name with the so-called purely objective attitude, but praise and publicize them in reality. Because the birth of every theory (including, of course, literary and art theories) is induced by specific environmental conditions (political, ideological, economic, and cultural factors, and so on) and special needs. If we do not consider the concrete conditions of our own country, but simply copy others, then where are the expressions of national characteristics and "times" in socialist China? Where are the expressions of the ideological distinction between socialism and capitalism?

#### Accused of Bourgeois Liberalization

90ON0485A Beijing WENXUE PINGLUN [LITERARY REVIEW] in Chinese No 6, 15 Nov 89 pp 7-10

[Article by Zhang Guomin (1728 0948 3046): "Some Expressions of Bourgeois Liberalization"]

[Text] In the past few years, the ideological trend of bourgeois liberalization has spread in the literary and art and the theoretical circles. This ideological trend has found expressions also in WENXUE PINGLUN [LITERARY REVIEW]. Such expressions are especially prominent in the fourth issue of 1989. They are demonstrated mainly in the following four aspects:

1. Vilify China's socialist society. In "History Cannot Be Evaded," the author vilified China's socialist society as "a nondemocratic space where metaphysics is rampant." Isn't it a coincidence that Liu Xiaobo [0491 2556 3134], who persists in the stand of bourgeois liberalization, also vilified China's socialist society as an "autocratic" society in articles which were published in Hong Kong's JIEFANG YUEBAO [LIBERATION MONTHLY] in October 1988 and SHIJIE RIBAO on 20 April 1989?

It is not unique. In "The Death of a Poet," the author vilified China's socialist society as "a decayed and dark existence." He wrote, "On 26 March 1989, the 25-year-old poet Hai Zi [3189 1311], one of the representatives of the free-verse trend who was known as 'the eccentric hero of poetry circles,' took his own life by lying on the railroad tracks of Shanhaiguan, leaving behind him nearly 2 million words of poems in manuscript... Unable to tolerate this decayed and dark existence, he finally allowed his own life to end." The so-called "decayed and dark existence" is the author's

demeaning reference to China's socialist society. The author thinks that living in this world is hard for those who are very conscious of existence and death. Hai Zi was a "prophet." He "finally could no longer tolerate this decayed and dark existence" and killed himself. Apparently, the author blamed Hai Zi's suicide completely on "this world" that is "decayed and dark." Isn't this vilification against China's socialist society? The author also said, "Hai Zi is dead. This is like a god's signal to China's intellectual circle which has slept soundly through thousands of years of deception... When this world can no longer provide full purpose and meaning for our existence, everything becomes a question of to what degree can we tolerate this absurd existence. Then do we choose to drag out an ignoble existence or to resist in despair?" In the author's eyes, China's intellectual circle has slept soundly through "deception" in both socialist and old societies; socialist and old societies are both "worlds" of "deception," China's current intellectual circle is in "despair," we should "choose to resist in despair," and the target of "resistance" is more than clear enough.

China's socialist society was established by the Chinese people after overthrowing the reactionary rule of imperialists, feudalists, and bureaucrat capitalists under the leadership of the great CPC. It is a historical period of transition from a semifeudal and semicolonial society to a communist society. It is bound to have various defects, things that are false, bad, and ugly, and a dark side. But it is, after all, dominated by the true, the good, and the beautiful—the bright side. It has, after all, made great achievements. And it is striving to eliminate defects and fight with the false, the bad, and the ugly—the dark side. It is striving to accelerate socialist material and spiritual progress and march toward a higher stage of advanced civilization and democracy. Therefore, it is by no means "a decayed and dark existence," "a world" of "deception," or "a nondemocratic space where metaphysics is rampant." The nature of making these vilifications is serious because they are generalized. They include vilifications of party leadership, the socialist system, the people's democratic dictatorship, Marxism-leninism, and Mao Zedong Thought. Because of this, they are all concentrated expressions of bourgeois liberalization.

2. Vilify Mao Zedong Thought on literature and art. The author of "History Cannot Be Evaded" wantonly distorted, negated, and vilified Mao Zedong Thought on literature and art, vilified it as "shadow" and "idol," labeled it as "anti-aesthetic" and "nonscientific," and arbitrarily concluded that it has been "terminated" and become "a heavy legacy." He thought that "those who have will power after all have been trying to get out of his shadow," that we should not make "partial amendment" or "partial readjustment," and that we should "overthrow it all together" to "reestablish" "the new-style literary theory." The article is 20,000 words long and filled with a large amount of fallacy, ranging from distorting the essence of Mao Zedong Thought on literature and art to lavishing praise on the "new-style literary theory."

Mao Zedong Thought on literature and art clearly upholds the fundamental principle of literature and art serving the broad masses of people, namely upholding the direction that "our literature and art are for the broad masses of people, first of all for workers, peasants, and soldiers." The author, however, managed to distort the essence of Mao Zedong Thought on literature and art as "upholding the practical political function of literature and art." Comrade Mao Zedong clearly said, "First, it is for workers, peasants, and soldiers." But the author managed to change it to "First, it is for peasants." Comrade Mao Zedong set the target of service of literature and art clearly in accordance with the principle of combining Marxist and Leninist theory on revolutionary dynamics with China's reality in revolution. But the author insisted that "Mao Zedong... made his decision on the basis of the actual proportion of target importance in war situation." The *Talks at the Yanan Forum on Literature and the Arts* clearly set forth the "basic principles" and fundamental tenets, which have far-reaching significance, but the author said that the *Talks* only answered the question of what literature and art can do in a revolutionary war, that the *Talks* were only a "wartime principle for literature and art" that are not "universally applicable." The author also babbled that "Jiang Qing is indeed the one who best understands Mao Zedong Thought on literature and art. That is why she made great discoveries and inventions" and "developed Mao Zedong Thought on literature and art." The author also babbled that "conspiratorial literature and art" used an extreme form of farce to reveal the bottom of the anti-aesthetic tendency which was well hidden in Mao Zedong Thought on literature and art, "exposed to the world the unscientific essence of Mao Zedong Thought on literature and art," and so on. He has indeed displayed to the full his ability to distort and vilify.

The CPC Central Committee pointed out that "Mao Zedong Thought is the application and development of Marxism-Leninism. It is proved by practice to be the correct theory and principle and the summary of experience concerning the Chinese revolution... It will be a long-term guide for our action." Mao Zedong Thought on literature and art is an organic component of Mao Zedong Thought. It is a product of combining the fundamental tenets of Marxism-Leninism with the practice of literature and art in the Chinese revolution. The "basic principles" and fundamental tenets of literature and art it set forth still have great significance today. Such significance has been clearly pointed out by the "Resolution of the CPC Central Committee on Several Historical Questions of the Party Since the Founding of the PRC." The author of "History Cannot Be Evaded" had the nerve to wantonly oppose the "resolution" of the CPC Central Committee. Mao Zedong Thought on literature and art has by no means been "terminated." It is never a "legacy," "shadow," or "idol." Nor is it ever "anti-aesthetic" and "unscientific." The ringleader of the counterrevolutionary group, Jiang Qing, had ulterior motives when she used the isolated, erroneous thesis made by Comrade Mao Zedong in his old age because of

a misunderstanding of the situation. This erroneous thesis was directed against only certain specific situations. It is not part of the "basic principles" and fundamental tenets of Mao Zedong Thought on literature and art. So, it is ungrounded to say that Jiang Qing "best understood" Mao Zedong Thought on literature and art, "made great discoveries or inventions," and "developed Mao Zedong Thought on literature and art." On the contrary, the "conspiratorial literature and art" practiced by the Jiang Qing counterrevolutionary clique was completely opposed to Mao Zedong Thought on literature and art. The so-called "revealing," "exposing," and so on are sheer nonsense. The author's attempt to "overthrow all together" Mao Zedong Thought on Literature and Art is only his own wishful thinking. We must uphold and develop Mao Zedong Thought on literature and art and enable socialist literature and art to develop soundly and prosper. We will never allow Mao Zedong Thought on literature and art to be distorted, negated, and vilified.

3. Instigate the people to deviate from the leadership of the party. The author of "History Cannot Be Evaded" holds that some people in "the literary circle of China" engage in sycophant and obsequious activities out of political obedience, that they are not "really independent... elite," that they are only "hack writers," that the "elite" would be ashamed to be hack writers" and "are really independent and detached from any power group and its influence." He himself is undoubtedly "ashamed to be a hack writer" and is "an elite who is really independent and detached from any power group and its influence." However, "in the nondemocratic space where metaphysics is rampant," he, an "elite" alone, apparently cannot handle it. So, he "wishes" that "a really independent elite ideological circle that does not depend on any power group or its influence will rise." He made this "wish" on "26 March 1989." His "wish" did not fail to come true completely. Sure enough, less than two months after he made the "wish," a "really independent," "elite" group that blew its own trumpet "rose." Collaborating with "the Beijing University Self-Management Union," this group of "elites" went all out to oppose party leadership, the socialist system, the people's democratic dictatorship, and Marxism-Leninism and Mao Zedong Thought. What this group of "elites" did was only "reveal the bottom of the tendency... which was well hidden" in his "wish" "in an extreme form of farce" and "exposed to the world the nature" of his "wish." Although his "wish" did not fail to come true completely, it finally evaporated like a bubble. This shows precisely that the "nature" of his "wish" is "unscientific," because what he said about the "elite" being "really independent and detached from any power group and its influence" does not conform to objective reality. The behavior of this group of "elites," which has "risen," has fully proved that they are not "really independent and detached from any power group and its influence. Although they are divorced from and oppose the leadership of the CPC, they have turned and attached themselves to the "power group" of the bourgeoisie.

After the political upheaval and counterrevolutionary riot of this spring and summer, the people have seen clearly what kind of "wish" the "wish for the rise of a really independent elite ideological circle that does not depend on any power group and its influence" really is. Isn't it instigating the people to deviate from the leadership of the CPC?

4. Advocate the fallacy of total Westernization. In "The Cultural Traits of Patriotism," the author wrote, "Since the day of its birth, China's patriotism... has failed to form the broad mind and modern characteristic of cultural cosmopolitanism." "To modern China's patriotism, this cultural patriotic tendency cannot but be a fundamental weakness." "Cultural patriotism has also caused the historical process of the Chinese nation learning Western culture to take on... the characteristic of the part instead of the whole." "The systematic learning process of an organic, unseparable, and unified cultural whole is carried out by us only after it is broken by force into unrelated individual parts. Because of this, China's modernization cause cannot but be filled with hardships, setbacks, and stagnation." Obviously, the author opposes "cultural patriotism," advocates "cultural cosmopolitanism," suggests that we "learn" "Western culture" as "a unified cultural whole" to replace Chinese culture. "Cultural cosmopolitanism" does not allow China to have its own culture. Learning Western culture "partially" and selectively and preserving China's own culture will violate "cultural cosmopolitanism," so it should be opposed.

We must point out that the "culture" referred to by the author is exactly the same as the "culture" referred to by Fang Lizhi [2455 0536 0037]—both include economic and political systems. The author made it very clear that "Western culture" includes the "institutional culture," "material culture," and "spiritual culture" of the West, which are inseparable and jointly form the "unified cultural whole" of "Western culture." So, learning Western culture as a "whole" includes learning "institutional culture," "material culture," and "spiritual culture" from the West. This "system cannot be broken by force into unrelated individual parts." The so-called "institutional culture" refers to economic, political, and other systems. According to the requirement of "cultural cosmopolitanism," "learning institutional culture from the West" is replacing China's economic and political systems with such systems of the West. It is not hard for us to see that the author's suggestion of replacing Chinese culture with Western culture is to replace China's socialist economic and political system with Western capitalist economic and political systems. Essentially it is to replace China's socialist republic with a Western bourgeois republic. This is pure and total Westernization.

The total-Westernization theory advocated by this author is exactly the same rubbish as that advocated by Fang Lizhi, Su Xiaokang [5685 2556 1660], Liu Xiaobo [0491 0879 3134], and their like. Fang Lizhi began several years ago to oppose cultural patriotism, advocate

cultural cosmopolitanism and total Westernization, and suggest using the model of the Western bourgeois republic to transform China. During a special interview by CHIUSHI NIENTAI [THE NINETIES] reporters in Hong Kong on 8 September 1989, he simply said, "I do not approve of patriotic slogans." Su Xiaokang used the television film *River Elegy* to vigorously advocate and publicize the total-Westernization theory, suggesting using the "blue civilization" of the West to replace the "loess civilization" of China. Liu Xiaobo, too, vigorously advocated total Westernization in an article published in the 1988 November issue of Hong Kong's JIEFANG YUEBAO. He also told JIEFANG YUEBAO reporters: "I do not care about being patriotic or traitorous. If you say that I betrayed my country, then I have betrayed my country." Fang, Su, Liu, and their like advocate total Westernization precisely because they want to overturn the socialist republic and establish a bourgeois republic that is totally dependent on the West. The concrete conditions of the author of "The Cultural Traits of Patriotism" may be different from those of Fang, Su, Liu, and their like, but the nature of the total-Westernization theories they are advocating is the same. Both are prominent expressions of bourgeois liberalization.

Bourgeois liberalization also has other expressions in WENXUE PINGLUN. This article will stop here for now.

Written during the period 12-15 September 1989.

#### Role as Leading Journal Questioned

90ON0484A Beijing WENXUE PINGLUN [LITERARY REVIEW] in Chinese No 6, 15 Nov 89 pp 26-29

[Article by Yan Zhaozhu (0917 2507 2691): "The Issue of Orientation Cannot Be Evaded"]

[Text] In its fourth issue of 1989, WENXUE PINGLUN published in a prominent space an article entitled "History Cannot Be Evaded," which vilified Mao Zedong Thought on literature and art as an "idol" and called on "people with lofty ideals... to strive to get out of its shadow." The editor's note preceding the article also stated in support, "We are not afraid of shaking and losing some old ideas, concepts, and beliefs" because they are "the inert force of historical development."

This is a serious political mistake. The question is why did such an error appear in WENXUE PINGLUN? Was it caused merely by the mistakes of academic exploration? We should take note of one fact. In the second issue of 1989, an article said, "Vulgar sociology has ruled the world of literature and art for a very long time indeed. A group of bookworms who claimed to understand Marxism forgot that Marx had no time to admire aesthetics. They always liked to unconditionally apply historical materialism to literature and art... These bookworms took the formula of 'social existence determines social consciousness' and defined the literary and art circle as social ideology. Instantly, literature and art were



distorted as a picture of image copied from social reality." Of the few remarks made, which one is not filled with feverish abuses of Marxist literature and art? which one of them has any scientific attitude of seeking truth from facts? The same author would write, several months later, an even more abusive article, "History Cannot Be Evaded," under the banner of "following only the scientific evolution of logic or experiments of evidence." In the fourth issue of 1989, the "editors" suddenly raised this article to a prominent, primary position. This very same writer took increasing liberties to attack twice in a row Marxist literature and art and Mao Zedong Thought on literature and art; whereas the "editors" admired him more and thought more highly of him. Can the signboard of "pure learning" cover up the mystery in this matter?

In sum, to conscientiously investigate this serious political error, WENXUE PINGLUN "cannot avoid" the issue of its basic political orientation.

As a journal of literary theory of national influence, WENXUE PINGLUN ought to adhere to a correct political orientation. Of course, this does not mean that it should be run as a political publication and divorce itself from the specialized academic sphere of literary research. But no social science or its academic publication can be an ivory tower of "pure learning" or escape politics. Because of this, we have reason to demand that a journal of literary theory enthusiastically adhere to and develop Marxist literature and art, strive to enrich socialist literature and art, and serve the people and socialism—that is, adhere to the correct political orientation. Otherwise, its political orientation would be wrong, and, through the so-called door of "pure learning," it would head for serious political mistakes. This was exactly the same situation with WENXUE PINGLUN in the past few years. Here I would like to mention two points for discussion:

### 1. On the Attitude Toward Marxism

History tells us that the great victory of the Chinese revolution is the victory of Marxism and that the economic and cultural construction of today's China must rely also on the powerful ideological weapon of Marxism. However, in the past few years, WENXUE PINGLUN not only failed to pay attention to promoting the practice of studying and researching Marxist theories, but also published many articles to either condemn Marxist literature and art as "the critical school of social history" or denounce it as "vulgar sociology." The basic tenet that literature reflects social life was regarded as "the theory of mechanical reflection" and was repeatedly attacked. The thesis that literature is a special social ideology was vilified as "taking political order to curry favor" and it was scorned and ridiculed as "sycophancy and obsequiousness." "History Cannot Be Evaded," which openly opposes Mao Zedong Thought on literature and art has gone so far that it has become unbearable. This is an important expression that WENXUE PINGLUN has lost the correct political orientation.

True, since the founding of the PRC, the course of using Marxism to guide literary research in the circle of literary theory has been interfered with by vulgar sociology and undermined by the ultraleft trend of thought. The criticism of the ultraleft trend of thought and vulgar sociology by some articles in WENXUE PINGLUN was correct and necessary. But the ultraleft trend of thought and vulgar sociology undermined not only literary research, but also Marxism and Marxist literature and art itself. In recent years, however, WENXUE PINGLUN had no intention of guiding people in drawing a line between the theory and principle of ultraleft ideology and vulgar sociology and that of Marxism. On the contrary, it published many articles which regarded and criticized Marxism as "vulgar sociology" and Marxist literary theory and principle as an "ultraleft trend of thought," thus forming the orientation of theory that considers vulgar sociology and ultraleft thinking as the inborn fatal weakness of Marxism.

Of course, Marxism is not ossified. Instead, it is an open system that continues to develop in practice. Some articles in WENXUE PINGLUN vigorously explored and broadened the people's horizon, which is conducive to the development of Marxism and Marxist literature and art. The so-called development of many articles, however, used the complete negation of the basic tenets of Marxism and Marxist literature and art as a prerequisite. Some people even used the excuse of "development" to openly advocate the "systematic introduction" and the "Chinese-style creative assimilation" (issue No. 1 of 1989) of Western culture, thus turning "development" into a synonym for "complete Westernization." Under this orientation of WENXUE PINGLUN, adhering to the basic tenets of Marxism and Marxist literature and art was actually considered to be "ossified" and "conservative," and doubting, negating, and abusing these basic tenets were confirmed as "development" and "innovation." Isn't this absurd?

It is worth mentioning here that, though rare, WENXUE PINGLUN did have one article honoring "Marxist literature and art." But what it honored was only "a faction of Marxist literature and art" and this "faction" is nothing but the "theory of subject of literature and art" of a chief editor of WENXUE PINGLUN. The author said, "The theory of subject of literature and art consciously uses Marxist philosophical ontology as its theoretical basis. It holds that Marxist philosophical ontology is not... the ontology of material existence, but the theory of human activity" and that "the world is formed by human activity, and its existence is human activity" (issue No. 6 of 1988). Anyone with a little common sense knows that this is nothing but a variation of idealism that maintains that "man is the center of the world" and that "without man, there will be no world." Looking upon it as "Marxist philosophical ontology" and, moreover, praising "the theory of subject of literature and art" as "a faction of Marxist literature and art" is really a great insult to Marxism and Marxist literature and art.

## 2. Guidance for Literary Creation

In recent years, WENXUE PINGLUN stressed using literary theory and criticism to influence and guide literary creation, which is, of course, not wrong. The question is what kind of literary concept the "editors" tried to use to influence literary creation and in which direction they wanted to guide literary creation. This gives us much food for thought.

As far as theory is concerned, in recent years WENXUE PINGLUN enthusiastically discussed mainly the theory of subject of literature and art and literary ontology. Of course, these two theories may be and deserved to be explored as academic issues. In this sense, we should not get too upset over some mistakes or failures in such exploration. But such exploration organized by WENXUE PINGLUN had two points that attracted people's attention. One was that WENXUE PINGLUN, which always flaunted "pluralism," lacked the enthusiasm only for implementing the double-hundred principle. Take the theory of subject of literature for example. Since the publication of "On the Nature of Subject of Literature" in late 1985 and early 1986, almost all articles on this theoretical view vigorously praised it, except for a forum held by the Theory Research Department of the Institute of Literature which expressed some different opinions. Not only did WENXUE PINGLUN refuse to publish articles of different opinions, it also posed as the defender of the theory of subject of literature to attack openly or by innuendo other journals if they published different opinions. Is the theory of subject of literature really so perfect that it cannot even be criticized? This abnormal attitude of WENXUE PINGLUN is not a scientific attitude of academic exploration. Or perhaps it did not treat such a theory as an academic opinion. The second point that attracted people's attention is that the discussion of the theory of subject and the ontology of literature advocated many theoretical ideas unfavorable to the healthy development of socialist literature and art. For instance, "literature is literature," "literature is independent of politics," "it is unnecessary to consider living as a source of inspiration outside of literature," "ideology cannot make people think freely," "literature should turn toward the inside, the inner world, and the unconscious or subconscious of men." Needless to say, these ideas filled WENXUE PINGLUN in recent years, thus adversely affecting literary creation.

As far as criticism is concerned, what WENXUE PINGLUN was mainly concerned about was the work of vanguards, or "new-trend literature," or China's "modernist school." We should notice that, with regard to the unhealthy tendencies arisen in such literature, some writers have made correct criticisms of one kind and another. We should also notice that the constant, major voices of WENXUE PINGLUN in the past few years have, however, played a role in defending and promoting such unhealthy tendencies. For instance, in 1988 the unhealthy tendency of "new-trend literature" was already very prominent and faced the indifference of

readers and criticism from the theoretical circle. But an article in the first issue of 1988 of WENXUE PINGLUN said that works imitating Western modernist schools "still have a considerable literary value" and that literary development must "flow with the external world (mainly the Western world)." An article in the third issue said that the modernist school "is the emergence of puberty in China's contemporary literature which is now developing" and that "satire, farce, cynicism" and even "hippie-like" behavior in literary creation are reactions to "the heavy burden and chronic malady of tradition." This is a simple and clear negation. Moreover, an article in the sixth issue explains: What our "ancient and profound nation needs is the strong stimulation of disorder and imbalance. The deliberate stimulation and complete shock caused by the appearance of one-sidedness, fragmentation, incoherence, vulgarity, and the confusion of daydreams in complete, balanced, and endless sweetness are meant to give it a shocking disappointment." Where is this going to lead "the new-trend literature"? An article in the fourth issue of 1989 told us: "China's modernist school knows consciously or unconsciously that their 'absurd' work actually has political meaning... In other words, China's new-trend literature uses the tendency of 'pure literature' to exert its nonliterary political and cultural influence." "Let us take a look at the concrete 'modernist expressions' of 'exploratory literature,' such as cynical and absurd ridicule, anti-ethics, antitradition, antistandard, and anti-order vulgar languages, obscure and ugly morbid images, confused and lost personal feelings filled with social content... Which of these is not violent rebellion and a challenge to the existing political environment and its cultural background? Which of them does not have a double impact on 'the cultured ossified system' and 'institutionalized ossified culture'?" We have reason to believe that the "editors" of WENXUE PINGLUN who encouraged and guided such "absurd" work with "political meaning" should be "consciously" aware of the political meaning of their work. But is such political meaning conducive to the flourishing of socialist literature? Does it help literature serve the people and socialism? Now that we are examining the political mistakes in the fourth issue of 1989, shouldn't this question cause the "editors" of WENXUE PINGLUN to examine their consciences?

I would like to use the space of this article to bring up the above two questions for the reference of the "editors" of WENXUE PINGLUN. Of course, there are other issues that also need our attention. Take the issue of cultural nihilism for instance. In the first issue of 1989, someone said that China has never had any realistic literature nor any romantic literature. Moreover, in the fourth issue of 1989, another person said that in ancient China from the Qin dynasty to the end of Qing dynasty, patriotism never existed, nor did the "social and cultural soil needed for the growth of national consciousness and patriotism." He said that "in order to get out of the predicament" the Chinese nation should, like the Japanese nation, "possess the character of 'not guarding against but volutarily

introducing foreign civilization' and the breadth of spirit to 'wholeheartedly absorb Western culture,' and so on. Take the issue of study style for another instance. In the third issue of 1986, someone advocated that theory "cannot blossom unless it is pushed to the extreme" and that we need "the courage to go to the extreme." These issues have probably really played a role in "pushing to the extreme" the political orientation of WENXUE PINGLUN which has already drifted off its course in recent years.

### Author Xia Zhongyi Criticized

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[Article by Yang Zhenfeng (2799 2182 6912): "A Debate That Cannot Be Evaded"]

[Text] Comrade Xia Zhongyi [1115 0022 5030] published "History Cannot Be Evaded" in WENXUE PINGLUN [LITERARY REVIEW], 1989, issue No. 4. In it he severely criticized Comrade Mao Zedong's *Talks at the Yanan Forum on Literature and Art* in the area of concepts, methods, and its influence on the development of literature and art in New China over the last 40 years. The question is: What concepts and principles should our critiques be based upon? And the fundamental question in connection with critiquing issues of literature and art is: Upon what concept of literature and art should our criticism be based? If concepts of literature and art differ, views on a series of issues concerning literature and art will differ. This is naturally true with respect to evaluation of the *Talks*. It should be said that there has been some development of Comrade Xia Zhongyi's concept of literature and art in recent years. In 1982, he stated that "literature is a spiritual activity that is purely noncognitive in nature." He emphasized that "the life of literature and art lies primarily in their aesthetic nature." At the same time, he also acknowledged that literature and art are also cognitive-oriented (including understanding and education in the political sense of these terms). This was very helpful in carrying a comprehensive exploration of the essential character of literature and art. Although his long essay most recently published still affirms the "multiple function" theory of literature and art, the thing for which his heart really searches is to "commune with art, in air as pure as that in any scientific laboratory." This laboratory reminds me of an ivory tower. The difference between them is probably insignificant. If we are to "strip away the adjectives and outer garments" from these articles and "allow their core ideology to emerge sharply into focus" (to use Comrade Xia Zhongyi's own words), then what he is demanding is "true independence for the literary community" (including literature and literary critics). What sort of "independence" are we talking about? In his own words, it is one in which literature and art are "truly independent and not beholden to any power bloc." The implication is all too clear, but let us limit our discussion to the academic sphere. What he said is that

he wants literature and art to be independent of politics, or even distant from politics. The "artistic orthodoxy" that he holds in esteem is extremely clear: He repeatedly stresses his demand for "pure learning" and "pure literature and art." Even the traditional practice of "teaching a lesson in an entertaining way" is portrayed by him as a "dualist theory" as he criticizes Hu Feng and Zhou Yang. I previously exchanged views with Comrade Xia Zhongyi regarding the essential character of literature and art in 1983, and I feel that the fundamental problem in that long essay which he recently published is still related to his concept of literature and art. For this reason, I now take the liberty of "cooking something up and selling it on the spot." I will now exchange views on this subject one more time. Debate between different concepts of literature and art were, are, and will continue to be unavoidable.

### I. Literature and Art Are the Products of Social Practice; the Essential Character of Literature and Art Is Complex and Has Many Levels

Since antiquity, as human literary and artistic activities have been carried out, various views have arisen regarding the essential character of literature and art, and different concepts of literature and art have come into existence. It should be said that concepts of literature and art in the past all attempted from different angles to interpret the essential character of literature and art. This was true of the imitationist theory and the expressionist theory, and it is also true of the various modern and contemporary concepts of literature, art, and aesthetics. It is a fact, too, that many concepts of literature and art have, to a greater or lesser extent, revealed special facets of literature and art and analyzed certain aspects. However, due to historical limitations (and sometime even class limitations), all have been one-sided or even mistaken to a certain degree. Only after the advent of Marxism, when classical Marxist writers and critics used such scientific concepts and methods as dialectical materialism and historical materialism, based their work on the reality of practice in human society, engaged in factual analysis and study, and critically assimilated the legacy of the literary and artistic theories of their predecessors (retaining the core of all that was rational), did they produce a relatively fundamental, scientific interpretation of the complex social phenomenon of literature and art and their laws. This enabled mankind to take a great leap forward from "the realm of the necessary" toward "the realm of the free." That is to say, people from that point on were able to grasp the special laws of literature and art in a relatively comprehensive and accurate manner, thereby guiding (in accordance with these laws) the healthy development of literature and art in an active, correct manner. Just as the birth of Marxism was a great advance in the understanding of history of mankind, so the development of the Marxist concept of literature and art was a great advance in the history of mankind's understanding of literature and art. For this reason, from the standpoint of history, anyone who is not biased

should acknowledge that the Marxist concept of literature and art is the most advanced and scientific concept of literature and art that mankind has had yet. Of course, it is not a "pinnacle," an "absolute authority," or a "mysterious forbidden zone." It must also advance with the times and develop with the development of literary and artistic practice. However, it should be fully affirmed that its fundamental principles have been tested through practice. They are in line with the reality of literature and art, and are thus science and truth.

It is neither possible nor necessary in an essay as short as this to give a comprehensive and detailed exposition of the Marxist concept of literature and art, but it is necessary to give a simple explanation of the most important and fundamental concepts. According to my shallow understanding, the following are the principal points of the Marxist concept of literature and art:

1. Literature and art are a social and historical phenomenon. They are a product of practice in human society. In the history of human literature and art, it was a type of social ideology when Marxism clearly expounded for the first time on the fact that literature and art belong to the superstructure of society. It scientifically explained the position and effect of literature and art in society. For this reason, to study literature and art, one absolutely must consider its social and historical context. Its social nature (including its human nature, popular nature, class nature, ethnic nature, and its historical nature) cannot be ignored. It is impossible to escape from society and the times to search for some kind of "pure art."

2. The fundamental character of literature and art is their aesthetic nature. Marx stated long ago that literature and art are a special way of perceiving the world. They are the most complete and classical way of looking at the world, and "are built up by following the laws of beauty." If one pays attention only to the social character of literature and art and ignores their aesthetic character, he or she will not grasp the fundamental character of literature and art, which determines that they are literature and art. This point is stressed repeatedly by Marxist literary criticism. However, beauty and the appreciation of beauty are products of practice in human society. Without people, society, or history, there can be no beauty or appreciation of beauty. For this reason, "pure beauty," a beauty that remains unchanged through the ages, and the beauty of the "ivory tower" (or the "laboratory") are only illusions. This kind of beauty does not exist in reality.

Thus, literature and art have both a social and an aesthetic character. Is this a "dualist theory?" No. As a social ideology, the social character of literature and art is what they have in common with other social ideologies. It is part of the general character of literature and art. As a special ideology, the aesthetic character of literature and art is what makes up their individual character. All things are a union of the general and the particular. How can it be considered a "dualist theory" when one acknowledges that something is "A," yet

affirms that is not "A" when considered from another angle? The "social character" and the "aesthetic character" both belong to the character of literature and art, but the latter is the deeper, more important character. I have a basis for saying this, too. Lenin said, "People's ideology goes from the phenomenon to its character, from what is referred to as the first-level character to the second-level character, going continually deeper in this way ad infinitum." He also said, "(The cognitive activities of people) are a limitless process in which people's understanding of events, things, phenomena, and processes advances from the not-so-deep character to deeper and deeper levels of character." Thus, the social character and the aesthetic character of literature and art are dialectically unified. Even while stressing the social nature of literature and art, Marxism has made incisive expositions on many issues connected with the aesthetic nature of literature and art, such as literature and art and beauty, the fact that literature and art are based upon imagery, the typicalness of literature and art, realism, sentiment, imagination, and illusion.

3. Marxism's theory of dynamic reflection is the philosophical foundation of its concept of literature and art. An ideological trend recently swept the literary and artistic community in which people were skeptical and disbelieving of the this theory. Some people, without thinking at all, even confused the Marxist theory of dynamic reflection with the theory of straight-line reflection of mechanistic materialism. This was either the result of ignorance or deliberate misunderstanding. Marxism holds that the content of the term "reflection" is very rich. It does not refer only to cognition, and it definitely is not a matter of "looking in the mirror" or "taking a picture." A reflection is the subject's dynamic reflection of the object. As far as the social person (subject) is concerned, the objective world is not a pure thing-in-itself, but is the object world of the social person and the person of practice. Therefore, in the course of reflection, there is both cognition and evaluation. To be precise, it should be said that the Marxist theory of dynamic reflection is a union of the reflection theory and the value theory, which has been achieved on the foundation of practice. Literature and art are a reflection of reality, and certainly not, as Plato said, a "revolving mirror." Neither are they a "direct copy or a lens-like reflection." Reflection has always included a subjective nature. This is the meaning of the term.

4. Therefore, the statement, "all works of literature and art, as conceptual expressions, are the product of the human brain reflecting on the life of a given society," was a succinct and incisive conclusion regarding the social phenomenon of literature and art. It bears notice here that the phrase "the life of a society" has always been very broad and complex. It includes politics, economics, culture, and military affairs. It includes both "heated combat" as well as "family matters and love stories." It also includes human spiritual life, the mysteries of the soul, and even the unconscious. The meaning of the term "human brain" is very rich. At the



very least, it includes world view, values, concepts of literature and art, aesthetic temperament and ideals, and personality. Some people attempt to force a contrast between political life and other aspects of life (stressing a particular aspect of life at a particular period in history is understandable). They want to force a contrast between the reflection of life and the expression of sentiment. They want to force the idea that "the human brain" is a "mirror," and that this mirror can only be "a mirror that dyes everything with political colors." One can only compare these ideas to "a cripple who looks at the stage" and complains that the stage floor is not smooth.

The content of the Marxist concept of literature and art is broad and deep. The major points I stressed above were only those directly related to the character of literature and art. The illustrious scholars are sure to laugh at the fact that I have not gone past the ABC's of Marxism-Leninism, and will say I am just an old book-worm regurgitating tired old platitudes. But take note, please, that in all disciplines, the ABC's are the most fundamental, most important things. If you throw away these ABC's, you throw away the fundamental points of the discipline. It is for the benefit of those "elites" (who attempt to discard the simplest and most real truths, scurry to ape Western ideas, deliberately complicate simple issues, and set themselves up as profound experts) that I rattle on about what is ridiculously simple. Marxism has always been open. It has always broad-mindedly adopted all the useful knowledge and theory that mankind has ever created. This is fundamentally different from wholesale Westernization and "gazing into other's nostrils," that is being slavishly worshipful of other people.

## **II. The Talks at the Yanan Forum on Literature and Art Were the Product of the Combination of Marxism and Practice of Chinese Revolutionary Literature and Art**

Mao Zedong Thought is a product of the combination of Marxism and the practice of Chinese revolutionary literature and art. Through revolutionary practice, and especially through the birth of the People's Republic of China, its truth has been proven. The *Talks* are an organic part of Mao Zedong Thought, and the publication of the *Talks* accelerated the development of literature and art. After the founding of the nation, literature and art also achieved great success under the guidance of the *Talks*. Of course, the term "Mao Zedong Thought" refers to its fundamental theoretical concepts and spirit. Those who said that "every single sentence is truth, and one phrase from Mao carries more weight than 10,000 from anyone else" in reality had ulterior motives. It should be said that the fundamental spirit of the *Talks* was aimed at developing Marxist theory on literature and art. It was in line with literary and artistic reality, and was thus scientific. Some individual theses are, to be sure, inappropriate today, since "times change and literary styles and forms change with them," which is to say that certain individual theses are not actually "universally applicable." It is not the intention of this article to

go into a comprehensive exposition of the *Talks*, but only to focus on two issues regarding the views of comrade Xia Zhongyi.

1. Comrade Xia Zhongyi made the criticism that because "literature and art serve politics" they had therefore "lost" their aesthetic nature. If one looks at the issue of "literature and art serving politics" from the perspective of Marxist theory on the relationship between the economic base and the superstructure (especially the complex situation among the various factors within the superstructure, all of which influence each other), it becomes apparent that specially highlighting the issue of "literature and art serving politics" fails to reveal the actual substance of the issue, and is thus not a universal law of literature and art. Now that order has been restored after a period of chaos, we have a clearer understanding of the relationship between literature and art and politics. As one element in the superstructure, literature and art are ultimately controlled by economics, and at the same time they also have an impact on economics; and politics and ethics have generally served as intermediaries in this interaction. For this reason, in the final analysis, literature and art and politics all serve the economic base. The only thing is that literature and art, under certain conditions, serve economics via the medium of politics. However, the fact that the phrase "literature and art serve politics" is no longer mentioned does not mean that literature and art have nothing to do with politics. If literature and art are to reflect life and "grasp what is deep and silent in human life," there will be times when they cannot but deal with politics, because politics have always existed in human life. After all, the *Talks* were speeches on the guidance of literature and art that were based on the revolutionary necessities of the time. They were not textbooks on literature and art, and thus could not have provided a comprehensive exposition on the fundamental character or multiple functions of literature and art. The emphasis on "literature and art serving politics" arose from the historical conditions at that time. It was necessary for all work to revolve around the task of "toppling the three great mountains." This was China's reality. Just imagine how ridiculous it would have been, as smoke and fire billowed up from the battlefields and blood ran in rivers, to launch into a great discourse about how "the life of literature and art is its aesthetic nature." Comrade Xia Zhongyi did acknowledge that he "freely admitted the political propaganda function of literature and art in given periods." On the other hand, he also insists that to do so is to "equate literature and art with politics." In reality, the *Talks* only stressed that "literature and art serve politics." They never said that "literature and art are the same as politics." On the contrary, the *Talks* clearly stated that "politics are not the same as literature and art," and in many places they mentioned or expounded upon such laws of art and aesthetic issues as artistic beauty, artistic truth, typification, "the difference between art and non-art," popularization and elevation, artistic norms, literary language, the psychology of feelings and emotions,

and critical assimilation of the literary legacy. Furthermore, the *Talks* stated repeatedly and clearly that "any work of art that lacks artistic character is powerless no matter how advanced it may be politically," "some comrades have overlooked the artistic side of art, so we must pay attention to the elevation of art." Of course, in terms of the fundamental spirit of the *Talks*, stressing the elevation of art was ultimately to enable it to better influence and mobilize the masses and achieve the goal of serving politics. This was dictated completely by historical circumstances of the time, but Comrade Xia Zhongyi says that it "covered up the aesthetic nature of literature and art." Why does it necessarily "cover up" the aesthetic nature of literature and art if we emphasize or highlight the ideological or political nature of literature and art in a given historical period? "Give top priority to political norms, and secondary priority to artistic norms." To speak this way in those years was completely in line with real needs, and was quite excusable. At least there was an acknowledgment that "artistic norms have secondary priority," and it was stated concretely that "our goal is the union of politics and art, and the union of content and form." How did this "cover up" the aesthetic nature of literature and art?

2. The actual substance of the issue resides in the question of the utilitarian nature of literature and art. Comrade Xia Zhongyi summed up the core of Mao Zedong Thought on literature and art as an "insistence on the practical political function of literature and art" and a "contraction of the multiple functions of literature and art into a single one—their practical political function." The "political function" issue, as has already been noted above, was the result of historical necessity. I shall not further belabor the point. Comrade Xia Zhongyi seems to attach great importance to the "multifunctional" nature of literature and art. However, upon closer inspection, it appears that this is not so. Comrade Xia Zhongyi's "multiple function" idea is probably just smoke and mirrors, given the following considerations: He regards "teaching lessons in an entertaining way" as a "dualist theory," believes that realism is "non-utilitarian," thinks that all mention of elevating "pure art" was taboo to Mao Zedong, and longs to "commune with art with art in air as pure as that in any scientific laboratory." In reality, what he wants to do is "reduce the multiple functions of literature and art to a single one"—an aesthetic function. Is there really such a thing in this world as a completely non-utilitarian "pure art" or "pure beauty?" This question has been debated continually since ancient times. The position that the fundamental nature of art has only to do with beauty and nothing to do with utility has deep roots. It has been advocated by Plato (with his intuitive infatuation theory), Kant (with his "pure beauty" theory), Gautier (with his "art for art's sake"), and the various modernist schools of thought which discard the true and the good, keeping only the beautiful. Although they expressed themselves differently, there was only one message. A single sentence from Baudelaire is representative: "The point of poetry is not truth, but poetry itself." In China's

literary and artistic theoretical circles today there are also those who vigorously advocate the theory of the origin of literature. Those with extreme views argue that "art is its own content and purpose." It appears to me that these are pretty much the opinions of Comrade Xia Zhongyi. In reality, literature and art and beauty are all products of practice in human society. People are social people. They do not live in a vacuum. Beauty, to be sure, is the fundamental characteristic of literature and art, but the question of what is beautiful and what is ugly involves human judgment, and the judgment of beauty must be based on truth and goodness. Beauty can only be independent in a relative sense. If it is absolutely cut off from truth and goodness, then there is no beauty to speak of. Xier was beautiful and Huang Shiren was ugly. Could this possibly have been unrelated to one of the facets of "goodness"—revolutionary politics? When the soldiers of the 8th Route Army watched *White-Haired Girl* and saw Xier get raped, they felt the urge to load their rifles and shoot the actor on the stage playing the part of Huang Shiren. Of course politics were involved here, but so was the question of one's attitude toward good and evil, beauty and ugliness. The emotion of the soldiers fully demonstrated a love for beauty and a loathing for ugliness. It would really be hard to analyze *White-Haired Girl* using such concepts as "pure beauty," "pure art," or "the point of art is art itself." Others in the past have already said too much about theory. I just want to recount an interesting anecdote. Wang Erde [3769 1422 1795], known as the master of the aesthetic school, wrote a well-known piece of literary criticism called *The Decline of a Lie*. In this article he made the rousing declaration that "lies—the depiction of things beautiful but false—are the original purpose of art." Now that was a thoroughgoing argument! The name of that school of thought—the "aesthetic" school—implies that it puts beauty above all else. It wants only "pure beauty," nothing else. "Teaching a lesson in an entertaining way" is out of the question. However, the banner of the "aesthetic" school cannot hide what Wang Erde was unwilling to associate himself with—utility. In reality, the great works of Wang Erde have never been about "pure beauty" or "pure art." Some of his works sing the praises of bourgeois preoccupation with pleasure-seeking, and some even demean socialism. He also has done some works, such as *The Happy Prince*, which display a sympathy for poor people. This shows that even the master of the aesthetic school is not really a pure aesthete. In fact there is no way to really be a pure aesthete. Anyone who attempts to "transcend utility" can, in the end, only degrade into the person Lu Xun [7627 6598] satirized for trying to hold on to his hair and escape the earth.

The utilitarian nature of literature and art has never been taboo to Marxism. Marxism holds that literature and art are a special way of understanding the world, and it has accurately revealed the nature of literature and art as part of the superstructure, and shown that it must have an impact on the economic base. This means that, in the final analysis, literature and art must "impinge upon

reality to change historical circumstances." It is just as Lu Xun said, "In the relationship between literature and society, literature first describes society. If it has power, it will influence society and cause it to change." Of course, the first to feel this influence are the readers. Literature then, by influencing readers, changes society. The primary influence on readers is naturally an aesthetic one. At the same time, by exerting an aesthetic influence, it had a moral, cognitive, and political impact. These are the "multiple functions" of literature and art, and they are very subtle. The issue of the multiple functions of literature and art is one of the fundamental concepts of Marxist theory on literature and art. Marx and Engels took great pains to stress that evaluation of works of literature and art "should be based on aesthetic and historical principles." I feel that to do so is to take into account the multiple functions of literature and art. Furthermore, this is the healthy development of our predecessors' concept of "teaching lessons in an entertaining way." I suspect that "teaching lessons in an entertaining way" is a fundamental objective law of literature and art. No less a figure than the great revolutionary, Comrade Zhou Enlai, strongly endorsed "teaching lessons in an entertaining way." Marxist theory on literature and art has always given extremely positive evaluation to works that reflect contemporary spirit and social life in an incisive and perfect way. At the same time, it has always criticized any work whose social consciousness is not deep enough, or which is completely lacking in that regard, even if it is of relatively high artistic merit and can provide aesthetic enjoyment. (Works of this type occupy a lower, secondary position of importance in literary history.) Naturally, the type that Marxist theory on literature and art promote and praises is the former.

With regard to the issue of utility, the *Talks* said it best: "We are proletarian revolutionary utilitarians. Our goal is to protect the present and future interests of the greatest majority of the masses, who account for more than 90 percaent of the people. Therefore, we are utilitarians who are promoting the revolution with the broadest and most far-reaching goals. We are not narrow utilitarians who see only part of the picture." The fact that the party's slogan today calls upon "literature and art to serve the people and serve socialism" is precisely a manifestation of this spirit. Since literature and art work is a part of the socialist undertaking, and since writers are also a part of the socialist nation, and are, furthermore, the "architects of the soul" and educators, when we put our pens to paper, we cannot aspire to "commune with art in the pure air of the laboratory." We ought to solemnly consider our sense of responsibility for the people and for the socialist undertaking. We ought to consider the "broadest and most far-reaching" utility, which I described above. If one wants to truly "transcend utility," he or she can only match the description Lu Xun gave when he satirized Yang Zhu. One would do best to simply refrain from writing, "because to write books for others to read is to do something for people." Why claim

that you "are beholden to no power bloc or its influence," yet write a long article and publish it in a magazine in order to "influence" others? This latter is a typical case of utilitarian behavior.

### III. We Should Sum Up the Gains and Losses of 40 Years of Theory on Literature and Art in a Comprehensive, Factual Manner

In the 40 years since the founding of the nation, the biggest successes achieved with respect to theory on literature and art are two: First, the basic principles of Marxist theory on literature and art have been popularized. Second, the fundamental spirit of Mao Zedong Thought on literature and art, represented by the *Talks*, has been used to enable the broad masses of literature and art workers, language teachers, university instructors, and students in literature departments, and the broad masses of literature and art lovers to gain a clearer understanding of some of the fundamental laws and principles of literature and art, thereby consciously using Marxist principles of literature and art to observe and resolve issues connected with the creation, appreciation, and criticism of literary and artistic works. This greatly accelerated the development and prospering of the socialist undertaking in literature and art. Of course, serious leftist errors committed by Comrade Mao Zedong in his later years directly influenced theory on literature and art and caused a leftist tendency in which people turned away from Marxism and ignored the laws of art. Such slogans as "put politics in command" and "take class struggle as the key link" were transplanted directly into theory on literature and art, resulting in mistaken theories, such as "literature and art are instruments of class struggle," "write only about the main event," and "illustrate the policy." In the Cultural Revolution, this tendency was exacerbated. The "Resolution by the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China Regarding Some Party History," which was passed during the Sixth Plenary Session of the 11th Central Committee in 1981, provided a detailed analysis and correct summary of these errors, the reason they were committed, and their consequences. This document clearly stated, "When Mao Zedong launched these leftist tendencies in the Cultural Revolution, they clearly strayed from the path of Mao Zedong Thought, which called for the combination of universal Marxist-Leninist principles with the actual practice of the Chinese revolution. We must completely distinguish these from Mao Zedong Thought." The same view should be adopted with respect to some instructions that Comrade Mao Zedong had earlier given regarding literature and art, as well as the "model opera principles" and things like *Summary of the Meeting on Work in Literature and Art*. For this reason, it is not in line with the facts to say that these things were "the development of Mao Zedong Thought on literature and art." This was a very rash statement. Even so, the party has not overlooked the serious damage done to literature and art by dogmatism and leftist tendencies since the founding of the nation. For this reason, after the gang of four was overthrown, the party set about correcting these mistakes. It earnestly

implemented the "double hundred" policy and induced workers in literature and art to explore deeply into various issues related to literature and art, theory, and aesthetics. A new set of circumstances was established which had never been seen before.

However, the existence of another type of tendency cannot be denied. Although work in every area has developed vigorously under the guidance of the correct program and line of the party since the Third Plenary Session of the 11th Central Committee, confusion has been caused throughout the entire ideological sphere, including work in literature and art, because Comrade Zhao Ziyang and some other comrades for a time did not earnestly implement the program of "firmly grasping the two civilized goals." In particular, not only did they fail to oppose bourgeois liberalization, they actually gave it a free reign. In the area of the theory of literature and art, some people worship the mistaken concept of Western literary criticism and aesthetics as if they were gods, and use them to challenge Marxist literary criticism. They ridicule and mock the fundamental principles of Marxist literary criticism, saying that it is "the same old line," "out of date," and "it does not address the issue." They say we must "start again from scratch," and that "there must be a fundamental change." They even advocate "pluralism." In reality, they want to cancel the leadership role of Marxism over literary and artistic theory. Confusion in literary criticism directly influenced literary and artistic creation. For example, the literary and artistic concepts of Freud have received boundless, uncritical worship from some people. As a result, for a while now "sex literature" has run rampant. No marvel has failed to appear. In some people's minds, "appreciation of beauty" is equivalent to "appreciation of the ugly," and what is more, "aesthetics" are equivalent to "anti-aesthetics" or "sex." If we keep this up, how can anyone say that "the fundamental character of literature and art is beauty!" Elsewhere, "penetrating deeply into life" has come under suspicion and been scorned as "mistaken and unscientific." The fashion now is to "turn one's back on life and face oneself," to build a car behind closed doors, and to engage in haphazard invention. Even one old writer, who had once used the method of penetrating deeply into life to write a relatively superior movie script, has resorted to this fashionable method. He has come up with a movie that is neither fish nor fowl. It has male and female martial artists and is full of violence and weird happenings. One hardly knows whether to laugh or cry! Perhaps this can be viewed as a phenomenon of sorts. There are countless others like it. This is the vile result of an absurd attempt to do away

with or weaken Marxist theory on literature and art. Comrade Xia Zhongyi's long essay never once mentioned these things, though. Does he choose to ignore them, or does he not even consider it a problem?

In summary, the road of development in the theory of literature and art has indeed included some twists and turns over the last 40 years. There have been disturbances caused by leftist dogmatism, and there has been harassment by bourgeois liberalization. We must reflect on all of these things in a comprehensive and incisive manner. So what are we to do about it today? Our course of action is beyond the slightest doubt. We must stake a clear position by adhering to and developing Marxist theory on literature and art. Adherence and development have always been dialectically unified. There are a few issues in this regard that are worth noting. First, the only things that are developed are those that have been proven through practice to be true fundamental principles. We cannot reject everything from the past and "start from scratch" or bring about some sort of "fundamental change." Second, we cannot remain with our feet set in cement. We must sum up new experience gained through practice and enrich our fundamental principles. However, this does not mean we should engage in idle dreams or "do something new and different" just for the sake of "being new and different." Third, development must, on the basis of a "show me" spirit, critically incorporate all useful methods and concepts from ancient times in China and abroad, as well as those from the modern day West. At the same time, it must winnow out the unscientific decadent chaff. We absolutely cannot "behave as if everything we say must have an antecedent in ancient Greece." We cannot engage in wholesale Westernization. In short, practice has proved that Marxist theory on literature and art is the most advanced and scientific that mankind has produced to date. It is just as Lenin said, "By following the path of the theories of Marx, we will approach ever nearer to objective truth (though we can never completely uncover it). If we advance along any other path, we will get nothing besides chaos and absurd errors." Theory on literature and art is no exception. Reflecting upon the lessons of the last 40 years, we come to believe all the more firmly that our only choice is to unflinchingly rely on (note well: not "subordinate ourselves to") the leadership of the Communist Party of China, adhere to and develop Marxist theory on literature and art, and work hard to build a Marxist system of literary criticism with Chinese characteristics. herein lies the hope of the new structure of contemporary Chinese literary criticism!



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